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EPISODES OF THE COMMUNE.



Arrest of the Brothers of Saint Nicholas.

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EPISODES

OF THE

PARIS COMMUNE

IN 1871.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

THE LADY BLANCHE MURPHY.



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EPISODES

OF THE

PARIS COMMUNE IN 1871.

IT was toward the latter end of April that the Commune, represented by one of its members, Drouet du Mousset, and two National Guards, paid its first official visit to our house. These men were courteously received by the Brother-Director, and behaved with the utmost propriety; they greeted us with sundry civil speeches, and contented themselves with making a rapid survey of the establishment. To hear them, you would have thought that the Brothers had nothing to fear from the Communist authorities, who were perfectly well disposed toward them; but, spite of such protestations, two Brothers deemed it prudent, even at that early stage, to get formal leave to quit Paris.

Except the departure of our two colleagues and the removal of the most precious belongings of the house, such as altar-plate, reliquaries, books, nothing happened for some time of an alarming nature. The schools under our management continued open, and drew the usual number of pupils, the third, in Rue St. Thomas, being alone closed, as the teacher was sick and no one had yet been

chosen to take his place. The Brothers pursued their duties as district visitors as usual, wearing their habit, that is, a cassock, a long black cloak, and a large three-cornered hat. The mud with which the high authorities of the Commune and the foul newspapers of the period had plentifully bespattered them, had not succeeded in making them unpopular. The good workmen and their children knew that the heart of a friend beat for them under that humble garb; but now liberty had been noisily proclaimed everywhere, . . . which meant that for the Brothers it was irrevocably gone. To dare openly to wear the livery of Christ was a mortal offense against liberty. This we had done, and were destined soon to feel the consequences of such boldness.

From Wednesday, May 3d, to Friday, nothing worthy of note occurred, and we were able to hear mass early every morning, as we had among us the Rev. F. Millériot, a refugee priest, who had been turned out of his convent.

Toward six o'clock, and while we were all assembled in the chapel for meditation, we were disturbed by seven National Guards fully armed. The corporal brought us a note, which he told me to read. It constituted us prisoners in our own house, and gave these men authority to take possession of all we had, and to prevent our escape. I feel bound to add, however, that our jailers, during the three days of our imprisonment, showed themselves worthy of a better cause.

The eve of our arrest had witnessed the ceremony of first communion for the children of the two ward-schools attached to our communi-

ty ; the teachers would naturally have hastened the next day to marshal their happy pupils, and take them to the thanksgiving mass and other pious assemblies usually held on such occasions ; but might was stronger than custom, and the Brothers were obliged to refrain. Even the Brother who had the care of the refectory, and whom the necessities of his charge called upon to go out marketing, was refused permission to leave the house, and the porter shared the same detention. Reckoning the latter, our community ought to have amounted to twenty-one persons ; but two young Brothers had luckily gone out early in the morning, to hear mass at St. Sulpice ; and when they came back, we called to them from the windows, told them what had happened, and bade them begone. They left at once.

It was not that our mishap had frightened them, but that they knew their services to be required elsewhere. Each set off at once for his appointed post, one in the second school of the Rue Vanneau, the other in the third of Rue St. Benoit. The latter was soon ousted by four individuals, who took forcible possession in the name of the Commune ; he hid for a few hours in a neighboring house, and then set out for the Rue Vanneau, to help his colleague. The two together held their own till noon ; but the best will in the world could not do justice to the needs of four classes, and two men could not do the work of six. To persevere would have been rashness more than courage ; so they dismissed their numerous scholars, and managed to leave Paris the same day in secular costume.

While on the subject of the Rue Vanneau school, we are happy to mention Monsieur Roux, assistant-teacher in the neighboring school in the Rue du Bac, whom neither threats nor importunities could induce to take the place from which the Brothers had been ousted. Monsieur Roux is a man of honor and a conscientious teacher of youth, and it is easy to perceive why he would accept no employment at the hands of the Commune, nor agree to the demoralizing method imposed on the ward-schools by the Communists. The Brothers' school in the Rue Vanneau was therefore closed, as well as that in the neighboring parish of St. Thomas, whose teachers were imprisoned in No. 14 Rue Fleurus.

To return to the history of our community. The anxiety which had seized us on our arrest gave place to hope as soon as the corporal informed us that a member of the Commune would visit us at eight o'clock, and that we might expect to hear further orders. We were simple enough to believe that these very orders would bring us relief, and we further comforted ourselves with trust in God's providence. Although in the hands of our foes, were we not equally in those of our heavenly Father? Peace and resignation thus sustained us.

Monsieur Drouet du Mousset came between eight and nine o'clock, and in the conversation which he held in my presence with the Brother-Director, reiterated the order forbidding any one to leave the house; but besides the indignity of being treated as criminals, another trial was in store for us, namely, a forced enrollment in the

National Guard. This was signified to the Brother-Director while I was in attendance upon him in the parlor. It was then that I saw that venerable old man, venerable for his years and above all for his virtues and the good he had done in the sixth ward, become a humble suppliant, not for himself, but for those young Brothers who relied upon him and whom he loved as his own children. Monsieur Drouet du Mousset seemed inclined to accede to his request, and even promised to use his influence with his colleagues of the Commune, in order to get this order for enrollment canceled. A life of three-score years and ten devoted to self-denial and charity leads one to think well of all men, and to trust in a promise without experiencing secret misgivings; the Brother-Director accordingly believed his interlocutor. For my part, I must say that I was far less sanguine. I did not judge the Communists by their fine speeches, but by the acts they were perpetrating every day. The following circumstance confirmed my suspicions: I was requested to furnish a list of all the Brothers between the ages of nineteen and fifty-five. I answered at first that, since their names were all registered on the lists of citizens kept at the mayoralty, it was surely superfluous to make out a second list; but a moment's thought showed me the danger of resistance, as it might be made the pretext for worse measures; so I promised to have the list ready by noon. I gave it in at the appointed hour. While we were thus detained in our own house, the Communists were busy filling our places in the schools of the

Rue d'Assas and the Rue St. Benoit. Seven Brothers usually took charge of the first, and four of the second. Who were the men chosen in their stead I know not; but this I learnt, that they did not succeed in winning the confidence of the people, and that two thirds of the usual number of pupils were found to be missing as soon as the new teachers were installed. Each school was henceforth attended by barely more than a hundred boys. Recreation-time was lengthened at the expense of study hours, daily prayer gave way to the singing of the *Marseillaise*, the crucifix was torn down from its place of honor above the teacher's desk, every sacred picture, even of the Blessed Virgin, disappeared, and the children were pompously told that they were *free*; still all this only roused the contempt of the scholars, and occasioned the dissolution of the schools.

Our arrest was soon known throughout the neighborhood, and among the passers-by in the streets that skirted our house we noticed many who were evidently drawn there only by the sympathy and interest they bore us. Among the rest, we were very much touched by some little children who, lying flat on the ground, cried out a hearty "Good morning!" to us under the bars of the garden-gate.

Our keepers had kindly allowed our pupils to come in to see us, which proved a great comfort to us. Many of them were accompanied by their parents, who eagerly joined in our young visitors' sympathy, and told us how deeply they felt the loss their children sustained in being deprived of our ministry. No visit, however, comforted us

more than that of Brother Exupérien, the novice-master of the order. Many among us had been his spiritual children and scholars; his presence and kind words cheered us immensely; for we hailed anew in his conversation that same earnest and sweet charity which we had seen him display but a short time previous by the ambulances of the four hundred wounded soldiers quartered at Longchamps.

As I have already mentioned, the infamous Commune had, several days ago, forced Father Millériot to fly from his convent and take refuge with us. In return for our harboring him, he shared with us his cheerfulness and fortitude, inciting us by his pious example and fervent prayers. He was our guest at the table of the refectory, we were his at the spiritual feast of the soul. His presence among us was a great blessing, but we could not dream of his remaining with us as a prisoner. I managed to get the news of our arrest sent to him at Saint Sulpice, where he was at the time, engaged in hearing confessions.

We wished, however, to hear mass and receive holy communion the next day; but prudence forbade our mentioning Father Millériot. What was to be done? Our corporal good-naturedly consented to go with a message to the parish priest, who, regardless of danger, was soon among us. I noticed that our National Guards respectfully saluted him as he entered with his sweet, cheering smile and fearless mien.

Father Millériot got leave during the day to take away whatever articles he had left in his room; he came toward evening, and the next

day being Sunday, he again said mass for us and administered the bread of life to the community. This strengthening food of the soul was sorely needed, for this was to be the day of trial.

I had been busy, the previous night, thinking of what means we could make use to avoid the decree of the Commune; for resignation to the Divine Will does not exclude a reasonable degree of prudence.* My position made it my duty to provide for the safety of my colleagues, and I was deep in plans for their escape and my own. I then went to them all, and said, "Brethren, let us not lose courage. I have the conviction that God will deliver us to-day, either by human means or in spite of them." The morning dragged wearily on; it was a terrible contrast to the usual Sundays. No service, no catechism, no Sunday-school, no children to be marshaled to church. Poor little things! we could not go to them, but they came to us; and on that day, our visitors were more numerous than ever. The sight of these faithful little ones was a great comfort. The world knows nothing of the sacred affection with which God fills the hearts of Christian teachers! The love which father and mother lavish on their family according to the flesh, is none the less abundantly poured forth by the Christian Brothers on their numerous brethren in the faith, their children in Christ.

By way of diverting our minds from the saddening effects of this inaction, one of the elder Brothers conceived the bright idea of going up

* The writer was the Brother Sub-Director of the house of the Brothers of St. Sulpice,

to his cell and playing, on an accordeon, several of our grand and solemn festival hymns. A ray of hope came to cheer us about noon; our corporal informed us that those Brothers who were either below nineteen or above forty years of age might go out till six o'clock in the evening. A sickly Brother who was over twenty, obtained leave to go to the doctor, on giving his word that he would not fail to be back by the appointed time. Of course every one was at home punctually at the time indicated.

At half-past one o'clock, a new member of the Commune made his appearance. His name was Salvador; whether it was his real name or a feigned one, I do not know. He was accompanied by a secretary, and proceeded to make an inventory of all the furniture and belongings of the house. The secretary was not so severe as he looked, and indeed proved very accommodating whenever his principal's back was turned. Salvador himself had a quiet, gentle expression, and unless appearances belied him, must have done violence to his feelings when he undertook so odious a task. While the younger and older members of our spiritual family were in church, singing God's praises and earnestly praying for their friends, our only distraction was to watch Salvador lordling it in our midst, and superintending the drawing up of the inventory.

The Brother-Director renewed the request he had already made to Drouet du Mousset, regarding the free exit from Paris of all his community. Salvador answered that he was at liberty to leave when he pleased, and that this permission ex-

tended to all those whose age exempted them from military service. I was glad of this, for the sake of those among us who were thus formally declared free; but on the other hand this answer fell on my heart like lead, since it irrevocably confirmed my fears for the eleven of our number whom their age rendered liable to forced enrollment. There was no longer any room for hope or doubt. Still, before being torn from our community and imprisoned in some communist barrack, we were eager to be heard in our own defense. One of our number therefore addressed Salvador.

"Would you object, Monsieur, to fully stating your intentions with regard to our body?" he said.

"We simply wish to subject you to the common law," was the answer.

"But, Monsieur, observe that it is precisely the law which has installed us in our present functions, and that you break the law itself by removing us or unwarrantably putting other men in our places."

"I know nothing of that law under which you have lived till now; but if each one of you can bring good and sufficient reasons why he should be exempted from military service, well and good, I shall look to it, and if the grounds of exemption are serious, you will be exempted. You make a bugbear of the Commune, but you are mistaken; believe me, the Commune has the good of the country at heart."

"And is it for our good that we are forcibly detained?"

"I hardly see what you have to complain of.

True, you are kept confined to your house ; but you want for nothing, and are even allowed to see any one who wishes to communicate with you."

"Allow me to remark that that is a very small part of the liberty which we have a right to expect. Not only should we be able to open our doors to whom we choose, but to go forth ourselves whenever we please. You have nothing with which to reproach us ; the people whom you pretend to represent love us, parents are sorry to miss our faces in the schools, and you actually arrest us like criminals, and watch our every movement ! What do *you* call liberty if you consider yourselves authorized so to curtail the liberty of your neighbors, and act like irresponsible tyrants?"

"The ward authorities have signified their desire to get rid of all ecclesiastical schools ; you have already been told so."

"And you would treat us like criminals because we have been true to our mission toward youth, and have stood by our post until we have been driven from it ! Ought you not rather to be grateful to us for having continued teaching under difficulties until other masters have been appointed over our heads ? Do you mean to call it legal to take us from our schools and force muskets into our hands, while you put in our places men whom you will be obliged to exempt from military service, although their physical fitness for it is exactly the same as ours ! Is that doing away with *privileges*, as you pretend to do ?"

"Better say at once that you are afraid of serving your country."

“ I can answer that charge by referring to very recent events. Were we *afraid*, when, under the muzzles of the Prussian guns, we went out to nurse the wounded? Were we *afraid* when, under heavy fire, we carried off the heroic victims of war? Thank God, the followers of the holy De la Salle have proved their courage. I wish one could say as much for all the members of the Commune ! In a word, Monsieur, whenever France has need of us and our services, she will find us at all times and in all places, for she has no more devoted sons than ourselves ; but it is neither our duty nor is it our business to take part in political questions. We are humble religious, who think of nothing but their work, the education of youth, and, if in times of extraordinary necessity, we can stretch a point and become nurses, litter-bearers, grave-diggers even—still in ordinary times we keep to our legitimate business, without troubling ourselves whether France is ruled by an emperor, a king, or a directory. To our mind, the best government is that which leaves us free to do most good, and which keeps the national flag free from stain.”

“ Very good principles, doubtless ; but practically speaking, it is every citizen’s duty to study political questions, since, as a voter, he has something to do with the government of the country.”

“ That is just one of the most dangerous fallacies of the age ; for to allow that every individual has the right to meddle with politics and public matters is, as current events will prove, to throw the apple of discord into the ranks of society.

The principle which you advocate is incompatible with the proper fulfillment of most of life's duties. If I read the papers during school-time, pray who is to look after my pupils? If I talk politics during my leisure time, who is to prepare my lecture for to-morrow? And besides, shall I be any the better disposed to bring my mind in unison with that of young children, and dwell, for their instruction, on the most elementary truths, when I shall have filled my brain with political puzzles?"

"But the Commune——"

"Do not let us speak of the Commune, Monsieur. I warrant you that you will not count me a worshiper of the Commune, and as I have no hope of converting you to my views, it is no use putting that question forward."

"Still——"

"I ask you, do you believe in your heart that the persecuted can, without perjuring themselves, sing the praises of their persecutors?"

"I thought the Gospel made this a duty to you?"

"The Gospel commands us to forgive our persecutors, and we do so most heartily; but far from making it a duty to accept their reasoning, it bids us resist injustice and untruth, even to death."

The Brother-Director of the house of St. Eustache, who had just come in, and had joined our group (he wore a secular dress), now took up my words, and insisted on their truth, which he did with singular coolness and ingenuity. Salvador, at his wit's end, was glad to escape, and go on with his inventory.

This discussion lasted three quarters of an hour ; but many parts of it have escaped my memory, and others were repeated more than once ; but what I never can forget is the deep indignation I felt, and which, I dare say, I must have outwardly manifested. When we had somewhat recovered from our excitement, one of my colleagues said to me, " How angry you were ! " I did not and will not deny it ; but if I was angry, I need not be ashamed of it ; for such anger as that was never made me lose my presence of mind, and though my excitement was great, it was certainly not inordinate.

I remember well the earnest attention with which the National Guards hung on our every word and gesture ; one of them would undoubtedly have felled me with one glance of his eye, could his eyes have done the work of a pistol. Others, again, I am sure, were secretly pleased with the speech and manner of the Brothers. These unfortunate soldiers, whose pay was thirty sous a day, were often heartily tired of the farces in which they were employed. One of our jailers naïvely said to Salvador, " They put you through a pretty cross-examination, didn't they ? "

The first scene which the Commune made us act was thus over. We had come to the interlude, which was much like any other breathing-time between two theatrical scenes. We talked over what had been, and what was preparing for us in the future.

The second scene is about to begin.

Apparently the Communists of the sixth ward considered us as very mighty and important per-

sonages ; for to *Citizen* Salvador was soon added another delegate. I do not know his name ; indeed, many of the members of the Communist government were acting under feigned names ; it was, no doubt, of vital importance to them to conceal their own !

I believe the new-comer was the head representative of the Commune in our ward. He demanded the keys of the house, and spoke of placing his seals on every thing in the building. I ventured to say to him,

“ Do you know, Monsieur, that the greatest happiness of men of our calling is to say our prayers in our own chapel ? Of course, prayer is a good and efficacious thing everywhere,” I went on, “ but we believe that it has a further power to move God when it is offered up in a place specially consecrated to Him ; and we consider that by denying us entrance into our own chapel, you are seriously curtailing our personal liberty.”

“ There you are quite mistaken,” was the answer, “ it is just in order to spare you, and protect your most cherished feelings, that I am going to close your chapel.”

I only smiled ; such an argument was scarcely worth an answer. The delegate went on,

“ Among the National Guards who will be billeted here, there may be some who, not sharing your religious convictions, might, if access to the chapel were allowed them, act in such a way as to seem to you blasphemous.”

The Brother from the house of St. Eustache answered for me,

“ I thought that under military discipline, the

most efficacious 'seal' was the order given by the commanding officer. I suppose I was mistaken, at least as regards the champions of the Commune."

The citizen delegate now resorted to the last argument of a man who knows himself to be in the wrong: he got into a passion, and opening his great-coat, showed us a bit of scarlet ribbon, the badge of his office.

"What are you meddling with? Why are you here at all?" he cried in a threatening voice, which scarcely admitted of a civil reply; then he added surlily,

"You deserve to be arrested on the spot."*

It is of no use to reason with men who care for nothing but might; one might as well preach to hungry wolves. The Brother-Director of the house of St. Eustache wisely held his tongue, and we all followed his example. Our silence was well-timed, as our Communist friend had an exhortation ready for us.

"I wonder at your complaints," he said. "Such men as you are ought to practice self-denial, and think themselves honored to suffer for their principles."

This was the same excuse which Julian the Apostate used to bring forward when he persecuted the Christians.

* This threat was destined to be fulfilled; the good Brother Berthullien was too well known to be able to escape the inquisitiveness of the Commune: he was allowed to depart this time, but was soon after arrested, for the unpardonable crime of having vigorously helped several of our youngest brothers to escape from Paris. His imprisonment was happily not a long one; he was released at the end of forty-eight hours.

"Monsieur," answered one of the Brothers, "it is not forbidden to defend one's self when unjustly persecuted. St. Paul, whose testimony you will not gainsay, has given us an example of this."

"Do you mean to make believe that *you* are persecuted? What do you complain of? We treat you with greater consideration than you deserve."

"Monsieur," I said, "he who has read history, and then finds himself in our present position, has little room for security."

"Oh! you do well to appeal to history. What about St. Bartholomew's Day, etc. etc.? This is no time to turn your argument against yourself; but it would need no very deep knowledge of history to know that it is not in your favor. I will confine myself to stating that I may with reason invoke the testimony of history against you, but that you can not justly do so against us. You have been too well treated; each one of you should have been locked up alone in his own cell. By leaving you together, we give you time to excite each other's passions. We may well take measures against you. Witness the Seminary of St. Sulpice!"

"Well, Monsieur, the Seminary of St. Sulpice has been grossly belied. All kinds of cock-and-bull stories have been circulated about it, as about many another religious house. It is the work of scurrilous newspapers, and honest men know well enough whom to believe in such matters."

Our desks had, during this discussion, been

carried into the infirmary, as our work-room had been chosen as the sleeping apartment of the coming detachment of National Guards. The time was now come for making the inventory of my own cell; and the tiny room, formerly the abode of peace and silence, was now as noisy as a market-place. Men went in and out, shouting and disputing. It was distressing to witness.

The Brother-Director joined us again, and, being a man of peace, soon brought about a little outward calm; still, though there was less talk, there was no better understanding between the contending parties. Our unwelcome visitors left us before we could come to any kind of agreement or compromise. They left toward six o'clock, just as the Abbé Crétineau-Joly came to see us; and right glad were we all to exchange their sarcasms and sophisms for the kind and enlightened advice which this true friend gave us. He assisted at and took part in the discussion between the Brothers under forty years of age; each one gave his own views and proposed his plans, and the unanimous conclusion was that we must make our escape. The abbé approved of this scheme before he left the house.

Our confinement became closer; neither children nor grown persons were henceforth to be allowed to visit us, and our keepers were as vigilant as watch-dogs. Charity, however, is inventive, and our beloved novice-master, whose visit had twice comforted us, and who had been working hard to obtain our release during the last three days, found some way of disarming the hard heart of the sentinel. He knew what bait

to throw to a hungry dog. I spoke to him in private of our venturesome scheme, which he cordially approved. The thing was determined upon; we *must* leave; but a slight incident nearly spoiled our plan at the outset. Just as it was time to ring for supper, the Brother whose task it was to do so, and who was not in the secret, not seeing the rope in its usual place, said out loud, "Why, the rope is gone!" The corporal, who stood close to him, echoed his remark, and wondered "what had become of the rope;" but he luckily thought no more of it, so that we were spared further anxiety.

The venerable Brother-Director knew of our plan, as of course we could not have left the house against his wish; but to guard against his being in any way compromised, we took care not to ask his advice *in forma*; we knew what he thought about it, and it was not necessary that he should speak plainly. We finished our supper, of which we did not partake very heartily; but to make up for our want of appetite, our jailers showed themselves doughty trencher-men. They had been eating our provisions and drinking our health for the last three days with the greatest gusto imaginable.

We went up-stairs and saw them all go out for a walk in the spacious courtyard. It was past seven, the time had come; and each one of us already wore under his habit a citizen's dress, which for some time forward must replace our beloved costume. There were eleven of us gathered together in one cell that looked into the Rue Jean Bart. A rope (not the bell-rope, for that had

proved too slender) was attached to the bed-post to help us in our flight. Every one had his little part to play ; some came and went, making a noise in the passages, talking loudly, while others showed themselves among the National Guards, etc. etc. ; another had the responsible office of watcher, and with vigilant eyes he scanned the neighboring streets, courtyards, and windows. When all was safe, he would cry, "Come quick, one, two—stop a moment," and so on. The escape was at last successfully concluded, under the special favor of the Blessed Virgin, to whom we had all recommended ourselves, and to the great delight, manifested in dumb show, of our poor neighbors. These kind people shared equally the joy of those who had safely reached the street and the anxiety of those who remained behind. I should have been the last to leave the house ; but the same Brother who, under the Communists' very noses, had smuggled away the remaining chalice and ciborium, now seemed so delighted at the notion of being the last to go down, after having watched and protected the rest in their perilous departure, that I judged it but charitable not to refuse him this gratification. One of our number remained with him, and they were to fly together ; but what anxiety the fate of those two was destined to cause me when I found myself safe out of danger, and could get no news of those left behind !

Some of us bore marks of our perilous descent, in the shape of scratched fingers and torn trousers, but that was nothing. The tenth was less lucky, and sprained his foot. With the help of

his next neighbor, he managed to reach a friend's house, where he spent not only the next night, but a whole month. He was well cared for by his hospitable friends, and was one of the first to reappear in the streets after the troops came in from Versailles. Being in plain clothes, he attracted the soldiers' notice and was arrested; but his gentle face, his frank and open speech, and white hands brought him out of trouble. At last he was able to join our community once more, and is now surrounded every day by his usual quota of more than a hundred little boys.

Meanwhile our National Guards were on the alert; one of them even took the precaution to sleep on a mattress laid across the threshold of the door, while others ceaselessly patrolled the garden and yard. The good people were welcome to do so; they could not disturb *our* rest. The Brother who filled the post of steward went up to bed rather late, and great was his astonishment to find, heaped pell-mell on the floor of his room, our habits, which we had slipped off at the last moment: he saw the rope too, and the thing became clear to him. The Brother-Director having prolonged his prayer till far into the night, made his usual round of the cells; his heart beating with fear and hope, he went from room to room, and having satisfied himself that the eleven victims chosen by the Commune had made good their escape, he returned to his own cell and knelt in heartfelt gratitude to God. No doubt his prayers gained for us in our flight many an escape from danger, and his wishes followed us like guardian angels to light our path before us.

The situation was precarious for the four veterans left at home. How would they get out of the quandary next morning? The thing seemed simple enough to me; each of them had free leave to go when he chose, and they had only to avail themselves of this permission and quietly walk off early next morning. How I should have enjoyed this practical joke on the Commune! The Brother-Director, however, acted with greater consideration, and toward eight o'clock himself informed the corporal of what had taken place. What anxious moments the latter went through on our account! At last he decided upon going to the mayoralty with the Brother-Director, and this step it was which gave rise to the report that the venerable old man had been arrested and shot.

It may be supposed that the news of our disappearance was by no means welcome to the Commune; but the good Brother Director, with great presence of mind, changed the subject, and requested to be allowed to take away the register of the community's receipts and expenses. "Impossible, citizen," was the curt answer, "we can not at this moment comply with your request; the books are needed here." The Brother therefore went home, but had scarcely reached the house when four members of the Commune made their appearance. With wonderful foresight, they set a sentry to watch the rope that had helped us in our flight; it was time, indeed. Salvador was among the four grandees who came to verify our hasty departure, and remembering the kindness and frankness with which the good Brother-Director had spoken with him the previous

day, he at once taxed him with double-dealing, and accused him of having favored our escape.

"If you did not hold the candle," said he, "doubtless you knotted the rope!"

The answer was easy; the Brother-Director had not even been aware of the hour of our departure; besides, had not the Commune provided us with other and lynx-eyed superintendents, had it not even granted the Brother-Director leave to go wherever he chose? This permission and its accompanying measures of securing the doors, etc., surely absolved him from all responsibility in the matter.

Having stormed and raved, and threatened the house with terrible vengeance, the members of the Commune came to the conclusion that the sooner the four Brothers and the porter left, the better. This was done at once.

As for us, the night seemed unusually long; it was not easy to find an asylum for every one at a moment's notice, and one of our number found no refuge till past midnight. So many well-disposed people had left Paris in these evil days, that we risked finding a stony, unsympathetic stranger where we had confidently expected to find a warm friend. For my part, I must say that I did not sleep very soundly, in spite of my host's kind welcome, and the trouble he gave himself to prepare an excellent bed for me.

I would not lie down before writing to Brother Bandime, our Assistant; I wished to put him in possession of all the particulars, that he might prevent our rope from becoming the cause of any further trouble to others. My letter reached

him on Monday morning, at six o'clock. The evening of the same day, the 7th of May, almost the whole community met once more in liberty at Saint-Denis (a village near Paris), and to crown our joy, we found our beloved Brother-Director among our number. It was quite a family gathering, each member meeting the others in holy exultation under the eye of their common father, after the danger of a storm in which many had well-nigh perished! With what joy did we not embrace each other! Each was anxious to tell his own story, and curious to hear that of his friends. How had the barriers of the city been passed, by what road or railway, and through which gate or in what disguise had each managed to escape? and so on; their questions were endless. One had got out as a mason—his face, hair, clothes, and, above all, his nails bearing plentiful marks of his trade; another, after a bath of muddy water, and having carefully donned a costume which a rag-picker would rather have put into his basket than on his back, had passed the gates driving a market-gardener's cart; a third, having learned the Commune's own watchword for the day, had quietly sauntered into the waiting-room of one of the railway-depots, and taken his place on the train among a crowd of ordinary passengers; another had gone through, with unsteady gait, a short pipe in his mouth, and a spade and pickax on his shoulder, making believe to be a drunken railway laborer of the Vincennes road.

Respectability was at a discount in Paris during those sad days; so each of us, as he told his story, had to describe himself under an aspect more or

less dirty, disreputable, and grotesque. It must have been, no doubt, rather difficult to keep up the requisite character to be expected from these various outward disguises; but alas! since the Commune had reigned, we had had multiplied examples to profit by and learn from!

God and His holy Mother be praised, for their powerful protection never once failed us. As I write these lines, I am again in my little cell, which has become, as before, the abode of peace and silence, while the harsh voices that lately echoed here have most of them been silenced in death.

The two unhappy men who treated us so cavalierly were afterward shot. God grant that eternal justice may have been less inexorable to them than the justice of man! Our house is now once more under the mild rule of our beloved Brother John, the Director, and we can sing with David, "Behold how good it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." True, we found the house much damaged, but what signifies material havoc when the heart is whole?

Since our return, Providence has been pleased to protect us against another hidden danger; for just as one of the Brothers was about to throw a lot of waste paper into the stove in the work-room, he noticed some cartridges lying half hidden in the ashes. There were no less than seventy-six.

Our days shall be more than ever exclusively devoted to the God of mercies, and our earnest prayer is that He may give us the grace to live in and for Him alone!

THE COMMUNITY

OF

OUR LADY OF LORETTO.

68 RUE DES MARTYRS.

THE Brothers of the Rue des Martyrs were among the first to be called to the service of the ambulances, and the last to leave the hospitals. They were also destined to witness the first outbreak of that dark drama, which will be known in history under the name of the Paris Commune. It was no longer the wounded on the battle-field whom they were to assist, those who fell with the cry of "Long live our France!" but the wretched victims of French weapons, struck down in the streets of Paris, to the savage cry of "Down with society!"

The opening scenes of the bloody and shameful civil war were enacted right before the Brothers' house, and they were obliged to look on at the hopeless spectacle of the triumph of anarchy over order, and of license over discipline. They were compelled to witness, with heavy hearts and tearful eyes, that procession unparalleled in history, of disarmed veterans, hemmed in by a howling mob of "federals," shouting out the Marseillaise, while the people welcomed them with huzzas, indicative of victory.

The noise of the platoon fire which struck

down two of our brave generals shook the Brothers' house, and the peaceful men feared for a few moments that even their retired garden would be chosen as a convenient spot for similar executions. But the very horrors that surrounded them shielded them from this indignity; the wounded were heaped in their parlors, the dead strewn their garden, and the federal detachments which two or three times made an attempt to occupy the premises, were so appalled by the gloomy spectacle that they were glad enough to escape the sight of horrors to which they were yet scarcely accustomed.

That nothing might be wanting in the sinister *mise-en-scène* of those dark days, two barricades were built under the Brothers' windows, and the steady blows of the pick-ax rooting up the pavement, and the dull thud of the stones as they were piled in tiers, could be distinctly heard within the house. Then came the reports of the heavy guns and mitrailleuses which were mounted on this improvised rampart, and which held their own until displaced by our soldiers on the 24th of May.

The Brothers of Our Lady of Loretto had no peace after the fatal 18th of March. Hemmed in on all sides by barricades, and surrounded by the federals, whose watchword it seemed to be to make as much noise as possible, nothing was spared these peaceful citizens, and night and day resounded cursings, howlings as of wild beasts, tocsin-ringing, musketry and cannonading. They had their fill, indeed, of every noise that was hellish and every sight that was heart-rending.

The poor brothers of Montmartre had to cross no less than four barricades to reach their schools, and on Easter-Tuesday, the Brother-Director judged it prudent to keep the community at home, where they organized temporary classes for such pupils as could still come to them for instruction.

At last the Communists had a notice posted on the door of the parish-church to the effect that "all priests were outlaws, and every good citizen was invited to arrest them,"* after which an official visit was paid to the house in the Rue des Martyrs, and the Brothers were given to understand that they and every "black gown" in the ward were included in the decree. This threat did not disconcert the brave teachers. Those who, like the spiritual children of De La Salle, had bravely done their duty during the siege, and faced death a thousand times, knew by experience that there is a Power mightier than the circumstances of war and the cunningly laid traps of men, and on which it is safe to rely in all dangers.

"Do your duty, and let the heavens fall," said our loyal forefathers. This grand old motto, so little known nowadays, is still that of the Christian Brothers, and has led them, of late, to a high degree of renown.

The Brother-Director troubled himself very little about the threat that had been made against his community, and went calmly on, without fear as without ostentation, providing for the necessities of the house and superintending the number-

* This strange proclamation was signed by the delegate of the Eighteenth Ward, and bore the mayoralty seal.

less works of mercy which the times demanded. He never ceased showing himself in the neighborhood, and going every day to Montmartre, where the situation was growing hourly more critical as regarded matters of religion and persons in the service of God. Whether it was that God specially watched over his safety, or that his own coolness compelled the admiration of even the most venomous among the federals, it is certain that the "black gown" had never hitherto met with the slightest mishap, when one evening, as he had gone out to help in the escape of Monsieur l'Abbé Alvier (a priest who had been detained several days in a private house), he was attacked by a National Guard, who followed closely at his heels, heaping upon him insults and threats of every kind. Impatient at this persistent dogging of his step, the Brother turned abruptly round, and calling on the cowardly spy, firmly bade him choose his road, so that he himself might follow the opposite. The federal raised his bayonet and pointed it at the heart of the religious. The latter was luckily prepared for any thing, and turning the weapon aside with his left hand, with his right felled the aggressor to the earth. A second National Guard then appeared upon the scene, and by his presence put a stop to the proceedings, which might easily have proved fatal to one or other of the adversaries.

The Brother pursued his way; but the time thus lost had cost the priest his liberty, and a squad of federals now surrounded the house, while the prisoner himself stood intrepidly awaiting them at the threshold.

The march of events was not slow ; day by day the Commune thundered forth decrees that could not fail to precipitate the Queen City of modern times into a frightful abyss of desolation. Under these circumstances, it was the right, nay, the duty of each man to take all necessary steps for the preservation of his goods and chattels from the indiscriminate pillage which could plainly be foreseen. The Brother-Director, therefore, judging that it was time to place in security the valuables of the house, addressed himself to his brother-in-law and his two nephews, who belonged to the Montmartre battalions, and who bravely gave him all the assistance in their power. The removal was rendered the more dangerous by the fact that the house was flanked by barricades that bristled with guns, and was entirely at the mercy of the Federal troops. Still the uniform of the National Guards, conspicuous as it was among those employed to remove our valuables, led the barricade watchers to suppose that this was a confiscation ordered by the Commune and carried out in its interest. Not only did they lend their help and countenance, but often shook hands with those whom they thought their own colleagues in the work of destruction. The best of it was that this help, generously rewarded by some of the Brothers' choicest wine, gave rise to much pleasantry at the "black gowns'" expense. "It was high time," said our noisy patriots, "to take all that these fellows had filched from the people's earnings, and then send them about their business, out of Paris and out of France." I believe they would have burst

with rage had they known whose health they were drinking, and whose goods they had so willingly helped to secure. No one can form an idea of what a feverish state of antagonism against religion had been produced by a few clever fanatics, among numbers of the lower classes of our Capitol.

It can not fail to strike the calm and impartial investigator into this two months' period of frenzy, that the father of lies must have openly interfered, in order that a people so enlightened and quick-witted as ours should have been brought to believe in such evident as well as odious inventions. All were equally blinded, and this willful blindness, which in former times had infected the upper classes of society, had now so thoroughly inoculated the people that it is not too much to say that the turbulent and misguided masses were simply running blindfold into the abyss, and were ready to believe the most monstrous tales, told by the least reliable witnesses. The Brother-Director's male relations had bravely done their share of the work; for their true object might at any moment have been discovered, and discovery would have been followed by a sentence of death. The women of the family were now to take their place, and we can not say that the men distanced them, either in presence of mind or unflinching devotedness of purpose.

The Brother's sister took in the community's furniture, etc., and kept it at a risk which it is impossible to gauge by any common standard, and which rose in proportion as the sudden passions of those terrible days exploded on all sides in un-

punished deeds of violence. After several weeks of continual anxiety, she had, toward the last days of the struggle, to spend several nights watching at the doorstep, to ward off the attacks of the ill-omened *pétroleurs* and *pétroleuses*. In this she was ultimately successful, but what was unavoidable was the storm of shells that raged in her neighborhood. Twenty-one shells from the buttes at Chaumont fell on the devoted house, and about forty smaller projectiles burst upon the beds and house furniture of this good Christian family, whose members were at that time in safe hiding in the cellar.*

Another sister of the Brother-Director, after having equally shared in the trouble of providing for the safety of the community's goods and chattels, was confined to her bed for six months, through the fatigue, exertion, and anxiety she had gone through in this work of mercy. The school was still going on; but the Brothers, seven of whom had left, while only five remained at home, could not hope to be unmolested much longer. There would be danger for themselves and vexations for their friends, in a longer avoidance of the search instituted for all those whose age rendered them liable to be enrolled in the National Guard. The Brother-Director, having no longer at his command the sums requisite to secure his young friends' safety, took the bold resolution of appealing to the delegate, Monsieur Bayeux-Du-

* This house, though so critically situated, was providentially spared, and was neither burned down nor irreparably damaged by the shells, while nothing belonging to the Brothers suffered the least harm.

mesnil. He went in plain clothes, and was at first taken by the Communist for a lay-teacher, and therefore received with great courtesy, the delegate expressing his regret that his salary should not have been punctually paid.

"It was no fault of mine," he added eagerly. "I gave the most express orders that the gentlemen teaching in the schools should be paid before any others. I attach great value to their services."

He was going to inquire into the causes of this neglect when his visitor thought it right to enlighten him as to his identity, adding that he hoped the delegate's expression of interest in teachers did not exclude the ecclesiastical members of that profession. This unexpected revelation had a remarkable and very visible effect on the astounded official. The bare idea of being actually in the presence of a Christian Brother, and having conversed with him a quarter of an hour without finding out his mistake, was overwhelming to good Monsieur Dumesnil, who no doubt thought that a religious could not be a man like any other! And how should he get out of that unlucky compliment paid to the whole body of schoolmasters! The delegate's sharp wit could not help him out of his quandary, and he thought it best to put a good face on the matter, and order 475 francs to be paid over to this *corrupter of youth* and *enemy of the people*, whom he wished anywhere, in prison or at the Antipodes—rather than here in his own sanctum.

The citizen delegate had, it is true, been apparently more consistent than many of his col-

leagues might have proved under like circumstances ; but he was none the less wroth at having been thus egregiously taken in ; he was burning to revenge himself speedily ; and two days later, the Brothers received a document signed " Dumesnil," setting forth the programme of study as regulated by the Commune for the use of primary ward-schools. With this came also a letter, insinuating that, no doubt, the Brothers, being firmly attached to certain dogmas, were therefore unable to follow this programme, and were consequently ineligible as teachers.

The Brother-Director, after due conference with his superiors, replied by a note to the effect that the school in the Rue des Martyrs being in a different position from the simple ward-schools, he, as its head, considered himself at liberty to remain at his post, as director of a free-school, in case the authorities chose to deprive him of his position as salaried teacher of the ward-school. The result of this communication was a summons to appear at the mayoralty, where he defended his propositions one by one, for a whole hour. The citizen delegate, at fault on every head, was forced to consent to the Brother's remaining at his post, on condition, however, that the written proofs of the reasons alleged should be presented at his office within three days.

Unfortunately, it was impossible to get the requisite documents together, some being in the archives of the City Hall, where they were carefully preserved, and not to be reached for the purpose of copying them, and others were in the hands of the parish-priest, who was away from home.

The three days' delay granted to the Brothers was thus of little use save to facilitate their escape from Paris, after which the Brother-Director wrote to Monsieur Dumesnil to explain matters, and beg him to be content with the writer's word of honor as to the reasons above mentioned. A second summons to the mayoralty was the result of this letter. The Brother's friends begged him not to go; the invitation, according to them, was only a trap; but full of confidence in God and in the justice of his cause, he declared that he was determined to see the matter out, and would not desert his post without good reason. A few of the clerks at the mayoralty itself showed their concern for the Brothers by quietly warning the Director. "Take care," they whispered, "you are running unnecessary risks. There has already been some talk of arresting you; the very perfection of your cause is a point against you; they can not forgive you for being in the right. Fly while it is yet in your power; it will be too late when once you are in the delegate's private office." The Brother, however, pressed his rosary to his heart, offered up a silent prayer to the powerful Protectress whose help he had so often experienced before, and with a brave look and a pleasant smile, entered the room which his friends looked upon as a trap whence he would never issue again a free man. "Come what may," thought he, "it will be God's will."

And God indeed deigned to keep him free for the sake of the five Brothers who needed his wise and beneficent rule, but who waited at home

in some anxiety, earnestly praying to God to protect and spare him.

The conversation was stormy, and at last the Brother perceived that the time had come when, after various threats, the citizen delegate would have fain proceeded from words to acts, had it not been for the Brother's admirable coolness, which did not give Monsieur Bayeux-Dumesnil time for the requisite formal order of arrest. He rose with dignity, and firmly said, as he bowed himself out of the room, "Believe me, only force can drive me from my school." He was out of the house before the delegate recovered from his astonishment. But there was no hope of tiding over the danger, and, though determined, as far as he was personally concerned, to risk any thing, the Brother-Director did not consider himself free to endanger the life or liberty of his colleagues, and therefore busied himself with preparing a plan for getting the remainder of the community safe out of Paris.

The execution of the hostages was just then hotly discussed in Paris, and every morning some Communist sheet came out with allusions to the law of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," with reference to the pretended cruelties practiced by the Versailles troops on the federal prisoners. It was not for that reason that the Brother-Director feared even for the *lives* of his spiritual children.

On Monday, the 5th of May, at nine o'clock at night, he set out for the Lyons railway depot, accompanied by his nephew, the National Guard, and two Brothers in their habits. He himself

wore plain clothes. As this group entered the station, all eyes fell on the two Brothers whose height and size would alone have rendered them noticeable, even without the proscribed costume which they wore.

The captain in command of the post, probably notified beforehand by some secret agent, speedily came up, and was carelessly accosted by the Brother-Director, who soon perceived that the worthy had distinguished himself that day at the wine-shops as well as on the barricades. He noticed also that the man was by no means savage in his drink, and therefore began by appealing to his sympathies.

"This National Guard and I," he said, "are neighbors of these two poor Brothers, whom we should be glad to help out of Paris, since the poor creatures have neither bread nor home, now that their salary as teachers has been stopped. I am sure, captain, you will help us in this work of mercy."

The captain was silent, but what with the wine and the Director's well-sounding words, he betrayed an emotion capable of being turned to good account. The disguised Brother quietly stepped up to the ticket-office and took two tickets. The whole guard was in an uproar, and the lieutenant, seizing the opportunity to distinguish himself at his superior officer's expense, had already detailed a few men to arrest the two Brothers, and take them before the Communist authorities.

A few women, of that wretched class who followed the insurgents as vermin cling to filthy

animals, were cheering this glorious expedition, and preparing to act a part in the procession. One of them, quite taken in as to the Brother-Director's share in the scene, went up to him, impudently rubbing her hands, and with fiendish joy exclaiming,

"We shall have some fun now!"

"Indeed? pray on what score?"

"Oh! about those two tall priests——"

And the whole *posse* screamed out the decision which the guard had just come to. "Though it is not far from here to Mazas prison," they said, "we will make the most of our time; you shall see——"

"I may see it, but I shall not think it fun; for I think it is a cruel shame to prevent these poor Brothers from leaving Paris after they have been turned out of their schools."

"Oh!" said the hag, "then they are not priests? They are Brothers!" And she sauntered away. Perhaps she was the mother of a family, and remembered that her children had found kind friends in their masters, the Christian Brothers. At any rate, she no longer seemed inclined to laugh at them.

The Brother-Director saw that decisive action alone would succeed, and bidding his nephew mingle with the soldiers, whose uniform he wore, to dissuade them from their inhuman designs, he gave the Brothers their tickets, recommending perfect coolness, and promising to go with them to prison, in case they did not succeed in making their escape. As he expected, the sentinels crossed their bayonets the moment the two

presented their tickets at the door of the waiting-room, and their papers were imperiously called for. While they fumbled for them, the Brother-Director and his nephew attracted the attention of the federals, and so disturbed them that the papers were not very carefully examined. Hustled by the crowd which was impatiently expecting to be let into the waiting-room, the lieutenant could only glance at the baptismal register which cut off one year from each brother's age, and the papers being hurriedly declared genuine, the Brothers were carried on with the stream of impatient passengers. If the lieutenant changed his mind the next moment, it was too late; for before he could have searched the carriages for his victims, the whistle of the engine had sounded, and the train was off.

The Brother-Director went home radiant, and full of gratitude to Providence. The travelers, however, had still some risks to run; the train stopped a long time at Borcy-Charenton, investigations were made in various compartments, and several persons were arrested. God protected His servants, and though the door of their compartment was twice opened by the federals, no regular search was instituted. The next day, Sunday, at six o'clock in the morning, two other Brothers went to Aubervilliers without the slightest mishap, thanks to the railroad laborers' costume which they had donned.

An hour later, the fifth Brother escaped in the same direction, in the uniform of a railway inspector.

II.

HIS task thus happily accomplished, the Brother-Director could sincerely thank God and rejoice in the success of his efforts. But under such rude blows, it was scarcely possible as yet to rejoice in earnest. A fortnight ago, all had been astir in the great house; thirteen Brothers shared with him the charge of a numerous and happy troop of young children; to-day he was alone, praying and weeping over the crimes daily committed around him, and alone with his anxiety for the future. He wrote thus some months after: "I shall never forget my feelings the first night after the last Brother had left the house. Every thing at home was topsy-turvy. Perhaps at that very moment some of our absent ones were arrested and imprisoned; and if I persisted in remaining at my post, I ran many a grave risk myself. Still I could not make up my mind to disappoint the confidence of some poor families and the love of their brave children, and I determined not to discontinue my classes at home. Besides, there was the violence of the Montmartre staff to be dreaded with regard to my two nephews, who were known to be but lukewarm Communists, and whose apathy was ascribed to my influence over them. Were not those poor youths in danger on my account? Their zeal in my defense had not only cost them the confidence of the Communists, but had put them in bad odor with the legitimate government

of the country. I could not forget that, having refused to join the ranks of the insurgents, they had at last donned the uniform of the Communists simply to be able to protect me and, if needs be, defend me against untoward acts of violence."

The good Brother might well feel restless and anxious; but when day dawned, the thing that seemed paramount in his mind was to find out what had been the fate of his runaways. He was determined to find out at any cost what had happened to them, and so set off early in the morning for the Flanders Gate. He meant to go as far as some intermediate station, where he could get the news he wanted, and then return to Paris by the next train.

He was stopped at the gate.

"No thoroughfare!" laughed the warder. He turned toward the canal, but there danger and disappointment were lying in wait for him. A few loungers, on the look-out for an opportunity of showing off their zeal, made believe to recognize him as a policeman in disguise, and were soon re-enforced by troops of citizens.

"To the water with the spy! Drown the traitor!" called out the excited mob, and like hounds on their prey, the people threw themselves across the Brother's path, and nearly succeeded in cutting off his retreat. He gave a rapid glance at the parapet, meditating a dive into the waters of the canal, but was suddenly struck with another and brighter idea. A few National Guards were looking on at the preparations for "lynching" the victim, and by their derisive cheers, encouraged the mob that they

should have controlled. The Brother boldly appealed to them, saying,

"I call upon you, in the name of the law that protects the life and person of every citizen, to protect me against these cowardly aggressors."

A few voices clamored in reply,

"Death to the policeman!"

"You lie!" cried the Brother in a stentorian voice. "Besides, have the courts of justice failed in Paris, that the first chance passer-by should assume the right of judging and executing an inoffensive man?"

With its proverbial fickleness, the mob now veered round and angrily denounced the Brother's accusers, who found it wise to seek safety in flight. Meanwhile the Brother made himself known to the federals, his quondam protectors. He was able to convince them of his identity by producing an envelope addressed to himself and bearing the mayoralty stamp, and the people grew as inconveniently respectful as they had formerly been aggressive. The National Guards refused to give him leave to go beyond the walls; but they willingly allowed him to go and come as he pleased within the *enceinte*. The Brother was determined not to be beaten. The next morning (Tuesday) saw him at the Eastern terminus, with a trunk full of the Brother's habits. The National Guards intervened the moment that the traveler and his luggage were set down under the portico.

"Where are your papers, citizen, and the key of this trunk?" they asked.

"My papers? here they are——"

"And the key?"

"Gracious! where has the key got to?"

While he was busy searching one pocket after the other for a key he knew well enough had been left at home, one of the men asked him what were the contents of the box.

"Well, now, it is full of muskets and cartridges."

"Whew! and you suppose we are going to let that pass?"

"Oh! you look so good-natured."

"Better not trust us," said the sergeant with a laugh.

"Well, we shall see— But where on earth has that key got to?"

The federals shook the box backward and forward.

"There is nothing but linen in it," they declared; "take your *muskets* along, citizen, and be off."

"But," said the Brother with a distressed air, "I shall want my key for the Prussians."

"Bah! perhaps they will be as accommodating as we have been," said the federals as they returned the Brother his papers (at which they had not even glanced), and went back laughing to their places. A few hours sufficed for the Brother-Director to satisfy himself of the safety of his runaways; but the state of things in general seemed more hopeless than ever, as the solitary Brother returned to the Rue des Martyrs.

The following day, he sent off a box containing sacred images, and various things of the kind, cunningly hidden among layers of female cloth-

ing. The trunk was opened and examined, but the federal who discharged this duty suspected nothing, and for his pains got a needle run through his unwary finger. By a strange coincidence, this needle was sticking out of a small pin-cushion fashioned in the shape of a Brother's three-cornered hat. The federal did not notice this, but swore loudly that the citizen had brought up his daughter badly, since she could laugh so heartily over the accident that had befallen him. The Brother took the hint, and turning, scolded his supposed daughter, who was in reality one of his nieces, and who had already played the federals many a trick during the furniture-removal mentioned before.

These out-door cares nowise prevented the Brother from punctually attending to his in-door work, the classes for children. The delegate found this out, and sent him, by the master chosen to take his place, a pert summons to give up his school. It would not have been safe to resist any longer, but the Brother proposed to make an inventory of the school furniture and belongings, which task he managed to spin out for four days. The lay-master was obliged to set a man at the door, with orders to tell the children who might come, that the new school would not open till to-morrow. Somehow or other, eight days passed before "to-morrow" came, and by that time neither master nor pupils seemed very anxious to begin the new system.

We may say here, that the children of the ninth ward, as well as of Montmartre, never ceased attending the ecclesiastical school as long

as it was in existence, and uniformly showed the firmest attachment to the good Brothers. As their teachers left one by one, they zealously helped the Brother-Director in his difficult task; and when the latter was forced to tell them that it was impossible to go on thus, they answered his sobs by a storm of tears. The parents were the next to protest. "We will have no other teachers for our children than the Brothers!" they cried as they kissed the Director's hands and overwhelmed him with expressions of their good-will and sympathy. These scenes were enacted daily till the Brother-Director had been forced to leave the house. Before his departure, however, he was obliged to interfere in favor of the unlucky lay-teachers, for whom the boys had prepared a characteristic reception. We will use the Brother's own words:

"Having sufficiently bemoaned themselves, the boys, catching the spirit of the times, actually organized an insurrection. Tables, blackboard, and walls were scribbled over with defiant challenges which I ordered three consecutive times to be rubbed out. Beaten on this head, the boys altered their plans, and I luckily found out, before it was too late, that a cudgeling was in store for the masters, who were expected about four o'clock. I also found the inkstands unscrewed, so that at the first installation of the Communist teachers, when the *Marscillaise* should be intoned, the bottles with their contents would be simultaneously flung at the new masters' heads. Of course it was my intention to put a stop to this. I preached gentleness and moderation to the poor chil-

dren, who for the first time were loth to hearken to my words. Neither entreaties nor arguments could persuade them that they had no right to receive the intruders after this fashion. The elder boys, especially, cried with disappointment at the very thought of giving up their intended revenge, and nothing less than a peremptory command on my part, and an intimation that by acting violently they would but add to my troubles, made them desist at last.

“ Having obtained their promise not to break the peace, and taken leave of my children, whose touching affection has left a life-long impression on my heart, I left the house, without awaiting my successors’ arrival. I was thoroughly exhausted, and could not leave my bed for several days after the good Brother-Director of Aubervilliers harbored me with a kind and eager hospitality which I shall never forget.”

III.

WHILE most of the valuables of the house had been removed, a few unwieldy pieces of furniture, and, what was of far greater importance, a beautiful statue of Our Lady and a life-size crucifix formerly set up in the garden, had been left behind. The day after the wholesale plundering of the church of Our Lady of Victory, these holy images were carefully concealed by the Brothers, who dreaded at any moment a similar sacrilegious incursion into their house. As long as he had remained on the spot to watch over this spiritual treasure, the Brother had scarcely thought of a safer hiding-place, but since he had been forced to leave, the thought tormented him night and day.

On Sunday, the 20th of May, he determined to get into the town and save the statues at any cost. The following night was fearful; the guns of Montmartre thundered incessantly, and shook the houses to their foundations. The Brother was now relieved from the duty of managing another removal, the triumphant army was effecting one on a larger scale! He thanked God for it, and yet what sad thoughts intruded on his joy at the likelihood of the triumph of order over anarchy! How much blood was being spilt, how many innocent victims there must be, how many crushed hearts on this wretched night! He himself was not free from personal fears; his own relatives were in danger both from the fury of the federals and from the probable reprisals of

the regular troops who were about to enter Paris. The fire of guns and bursting shells, whose lurid light and hissing report were too plainly seen and heard, caused the poor Brother ceaseless torment and cruel uncertainty. It was a frightful situation, and only the thought of the peculiar Providence which had always watched over the followers of De la Salle could give him strength to bear such trials.

On Saturday, the 26th of May, the good Brother, whom anxiety made restless, set off on foot for Charenton, a neighboring village, to cheer by his presence some of the women of his family, who had taken refuge there, while anxiously awaiting the result of the last struggle in which their husbands, sons, and brothers were now engaged. On reaching Vincennes, which he had heard was in the hands of the regulars, but which he found occupied by the federals in a terrible state of excitement, he could not help an anxious thought crossing his mind, concerning his bag in which his habit was packed, and which a whim of the insurgents might at any moment have caused to be opened and searched.

God, however, was as watchful as ever over His servant, and an honest young peasant whom he met on the road volunteered to give him a lift in his light cart. His new friend, without asking any questions, noticed nevertheless that the Brother cast an anxious glance now and then at his tell-tale bag, and guessing that his luggage caused him some apprehension, quietly took the bag and pushed it under the straw that covered the front of the cart.

"Never fear," he said cheeringly, "they will never look for it there."

He spoke truly; for the straw was never touched, and the valise remained undiscovered. Presently a barricade brought them to a stand-still, and, as bad luck would have it, right in front of a tavern. The Brother judged that it would be ungrateful not to reciprocate the kind offices of the young man by offering him some refreshment. The two got down and went into the wine-shop, where two federals had just taken their seats. They evidently expected their good-will to be catered for at the cost of a bumper, and, to tell the truth, the price was not high, when the protection of two such stalwart men could be thus secured. The Brother did not waste a moment.

"These citizens will not refuse to join us in a health to all present," he said, and immediately ordered four small bottles of white wine. His voice was firm, though his heart quailed; for the poor religious shrank from the uncongenial part he had to play in these sad days. "What would any one think of me," he said to himself, "if they could see me in this horrible place, clinking glasses with these men so sinister in look, and so filthy in speech? But after all, my guardian angel sees me, and I only hope he will forgive me for giving him such sorry companions."

The driver of the light cart was one of those intelligent peasants who know how to hide a marvelously clear understanding under a rustic and simple bearing. Still ignorant of his companion's secret, he had guessed nevertheless that the present company was dangerous to his safety,

and with great tact as well as real kindness, he came to the rescue by the following commonplace remark,

“How shall we get out with our cart? My uncle and I are going to Charenton, to fetch my baby home, and I shall not like to be out late.”

The baby's father and his supposed relative received the information they wanted, and left Vincennes in safety. Neither one nor the other forgot to thank God for this escape from what might have turned out a serious danger.

IV.

THE civil war was drawing to a close; and the religious habit was no longer proscribed in Paris, but the difficulty was now the other way. It was hard to get into the city at all. The authorities were obliged to be very cautious, and it was next to impossible to procure passes, unless one happened to be able to produce valid proofs of identity. The Brother-Director of the house in the Rue des Martyrs was destined to learn this by experience. No doubt his unshaven face and neglected, stubby beard gave him some unlucky resemblance to the heroes of the Commune, for he was arrested fully twenty times on his way into the city.

One of these arrests gave rise to a curious incident. The Brother himself tells the story.

“While walking about a terminus, waiting for the train to leave, I was arrested no less than four times, and I really believed that I should be unable to continue my journey that day. At last, however, I managed to get into the car, but accompanied and watched by two policemen, who were alone with me in this small compartment, from which they in fact had warned off all other passengers. I asked the man opposite me, if he had been detailed to watch me?

“‘I am doing my duty,’ he answered curtly. And this was all the answer he vouchsafed to several other questions which I asked.

“I thought that the sight of my photograph

would prove a satisfactory passport, and so I handed it to my grim neighbor.

“‘Brother D——!’ he exclaimed; ‘my old master, whom I am always telling my son about. My son is a scholar at Miart, where I was brought up myself. If you know that good Brother, and are a friend of his, you must be an honest man. I would answer for you; but,’ he continued, after a few moments’ attentive scrutiny of my person, ‘if I am not mistaken, you are he. . . . My dearest brother! is it possible? Fool that I was, not to have known you at once.’

“The good man threw himself into my arms, crying,

“‘Now, indeed, I arrest you in good earnest; not in the name of the law, but in that of friendship.’

“I had all the trouble in the world to persuade him to release me, which he would not consent to do till I had solemnly promised him a visit at the earliest opportunity at my disposal. I didn’t succeed in getting into the city till a few days later.”

V.

"ON Saturday, the 3d of June," the Brother goes on to say, "our house was restored to us, and the following Monday, we reopened our schools, to the great delight of the whole neighborhood. It would be impossible to reckon the many proofs of friendly interest given us on this occasion, even by the turbulent population of Montmartre.

"The lay-teacher who had temporarily usurped our place, behaved with perfect propriety, and willingly went back to his old situation as assistant-teacher in the school of the Rue de la Victoire.

"Four days after the reopening, our establishment had fallen back into its old groove. We had never been more fortunate; our palmiest days had returned. The numberless children who had left the school for good on the day of our departure, flocked back to their beloved teachers. How many touching meetings did I not witness, and how heartily I sympathized with the parents, who could not find words in which to express their joy at giving us their children once more, that we might train them, as they said, to become good Christians, and to avoid the dreadful crimes which had lately disgraced Paris.

"This great and blessed work, that of the moral regeneration of society through the Christian training of youth, now absorbs all our energies. God can make good grow out of evil. Let us hope,

therefore, that from the national calamities which we have gone through, a new era of zeal, of devotedness, and of success may dawn for us, the Christian teachers of the rising generation. This will doubtless be the best balm for the wounds of the nation."

THE COMMUNITY
OF THE
FAUBOURG ST. MARTIN, NO. 59.

I.

THE trials that fell to the share of the Brothers of the Faubourg St. Martin came upon them long before the time of the Commune. By trials, of course I do not mean the hardships of war and the service of the wounded; for although these were painful and saddening duties, yet each Christian heart, far from complaining of them, was proud and happy to share in them.

What I mean by trials was the period of persecution and sacrilege, which, in a few districts less well disciplined than the rest, the future Communists had succeeded in inaugurating even before they had risen to power. For instance, when the siege of Paris began, and a certain feeling of propriety prompted the closing of the theatres, the authorities of this quarter, utterly refusing to wean the inhabitants from unhealthy and immoral pleasures—dangerous enough at all times, but now an insult to the suffering fatherland—boldly seized upon the playground of the school and turned it into a theatre. Actors and actresses of the vilest kind were engaged to perform in plays that kept the population wide awake until far into the night.

The day after these performances, which generally ended in shameful license, the poor Brothers, whose rest had been so thoughtlessly disturbed at night by deafening cries, had to efface, before the school began, the sickening marks of the previous revelry. Sometimes even the floor and tables in the school-rooms were not free from the traces of such orgies, and oftener still some breakage either of glass or of furniture was there to show how far the violence of the spectators had gone.

After the truce, the playground was used as a club for election-meetings, and the pious Brothers tried in vain to close their ears to the frenzied hurrahs with which the enunciation of subversive principles was invariably greeted. The Communists or "Men of March," as they were sometimes called, took care to follow these precedents; but now to the playground were added the class-rooms, of which the National Guard took possession at all hours, and where they proceeded to the elections of their commanders. The Brothers, who had hitherto patiently submitted to these intrusions, while no one but themselves had been annoyed, now bitterly complained of the interruptions to the studies of the children under their care, and of the ever-recurring elections which forced them to send away their scholars early in the afternoon. They appealed to the authorities, but in vain; and received no more satisfactory answer than this, that every other business must temporarily give way to the grand business of the organization of the Commune.

Other anxieties made these daily vexations

weigh heavier yet. The decree had gone forth excluding ecclesiastical teachers from the schools, and it was to be expected that local measures would soon be taken against this community in particular. It is true, however, that the good Brothers, who were beloved and appreciated throughout the quarter, constantly received the most flattering marks of the devotion of their pupils, and had no personal violence to fear, at least for the moment. The people were unanimous in their sympathy for them, and were determined to use force to protect them against any aggression. This was in one sense a support to the good men, but on the other hand it was also an additional subject of apprehension ; for the prospect of becoming the cause of a fratricidal struggle was even yet more appalling to these men of peace, than any danger threatening their lives and liberty could ever be.

On the 15th of April, a delegate of the Commune appeared and demanded to know the number of our classes and of the scholars attending them. He made no secret of the ward authorities' intention to replace the ecclesiastical by lay teachers, and alluding to the popularity of the Brothers, concluded with these words,

"It is true that you will be able to compete with us by opening free-schools. It is well known that you will not be at a loss for the means to do so."

These last words seemed to imply a threat ; for it was universally known how eager these gentlemen were to lay hands on their neighbors' goods. The delegate left the Brother-Di-

rector in some perplexity. Would it be best to await the course of events, or immediately to place his community beyond the reach of danger?

Three days passed thus, when, on the night of the 18th, a letter was mysteriously handed to the Brother-Director, informing him that according to certain information the decree had gone forth commanding the forced enrollment in the National Guards of every member of the community within the next forty-eight hours. There was no time to be lost, and it was decided at once to evacuate the house that very night.

The Brother-Director distributed suits of plain clothes among the Brothers, and gave them each a small sum of money. They dispersed, relying on the divine protection, and found refuge, some in friends', some in relatives' houses. The Brother-Director managed to leave Paris with the five youngest Brothers, whom he would not leave; and the others succeeded in passing the barriers and fortifications under various disguises. A few days after their dispersion, all were safely housed in branch establishments of their own order.

I am mistaken in saying *all*. One of them, Brother A—— F——, who had charge of the altar-boys and choristers of St. Joseph's parish-church, was allowed to remain at his post. He was even able to teach his pupils regularly, all through the reign of the Commune, in one of the many halls attached to the old church.

The people of the neighborhood were furious when they heard of the Brothers' departure. The parents besieged the porters of the various

schools, expressing their regret and disappointment; while others, knowing that the Brother-Director had gone to Beauvais, wrote to him in the most warm and sympathetic terms.

II.

THE very day of the Brothers' departure, Citizen Poirson was installed as head-master of the schools of the Faubourg St. Martin. He was three days choosing his assistant-teachers and settling himself in his new situation, while the following prospectus was posted on the closed doors of the school as well as at the mayoralty and other conspicuous places in the ward :

"The public are hereby notified that the ward-school for boys, in the Faubourg St. Martin, has just been reorganized under the direction of lay-teachers, and now affords every advantage, moral and intellectual.

"The teaching (which will be conducted in accordance with the principles of rational philosophy) will include reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, the metrical system, elementary geometry, geography, history, *rational morality*, singing, and artistic and professional drawing.

"Every boy between the ages of six and fifteen, no matter what may be his nationality or religion, will be admitted on presentation of a card stamped with the mayoralty seal. Those who have formerly attended this school will need no new card of admission.

"The school will open at eight o'clock in the morning, on the 24th of April. There will be a course of lectures on *rational morality* and political economy every Thursday evening, at eight

o'clock, by Citizen Poirson, attorney-at-law and head-master of the school. The head-master will receive the pupils' parents between the hours of four and nine every evening, Sundays and Thursdays excepted."

This enticing programme failed to draw "crowded houses," and if the number of pupils increased as time went on, it was only because the parents, unable to watch their children, and fearful of seeing them roam the streets in these days of terror, preferred to send them to school for safety, thus choosing of two evils the least.

To the honor of Citizen Poirson be it said, that he behaved like an honest and honorable man. He ordered the Brothers' rooms and cells to be closed, and prevented his assistants taking up their abode in them, or in any way carrying off the personal property which the Brothers had left behind. During the last eight days of the final struggle, he remained in the house the greater part of every night, protecting the house by every means in his power; and if the porter said true, preventing it on one occasion from being set fire to by a picket of National Guards. After the fall of the Commune, the mayor authorized Citizen Poirson to continue his functions until the Brothers should return; but Monsieur de Montmatras, Primary Inspector, refused to ratify the order, and desired the porter to close the doors to the Communist teachers. The next day he sent teachers of his own choosing, who kept the school open till Friday, the second of June, when the Brothers came back and retook possession of their beloved classes.

III.

THEIR return was the signal of many a touching scene.

The Brothers re-entered Paris on foot, carrying their bags, and whether by preconcerted plans or by a lucky chance, a certain number of their former scholars met them on the ramparts at the moment of their crossing over. The children rushed to their beloved masters, cheered them, surrounded them, carried off their satchels, and led them back in triumph through the crowded quarter, where their return was eagerly looked forward to by all.

When they reached the school, the children assembled there rose unanimously with frenzied screams of joy, clapping their hands and crying, "Hurrah for the Brothers! Hurrah for the Brothers!"*

The same feelings were shared by many a poor family, and for weeks there was a constant stream of parents coming to congratulate the Brothers on their happy return, and tell them how happy they themselves were to know that their children were once more in safe hands.

The schools of the Faubourg St. Martin are more prosperous than they ever were, the num-

* The same eagerness was manifested all over the city, even in the most revolutionary quarters. Many a man votes for a Communist representative who would not send his children anywhere but to a Brothers' school. It may seem a paradox, but it is practically true.

bers of pupils increase so that the mayoralty is forced to put off many an applicant until a vacancy shall occur, and the boys are stirred up to active exertion by the thoughts of the lost time they have to make up for, and the wish to compensate their dear masters for all the trials through which they have passed.

As for the teachers themselves, adversity has strengthened and annealed them, so that they outdo themselves in works of mercy and deeds of self-devotion. May they long continue to do so!

THE SCHOOLS OF BELLEVILLE.

I.

BELLEVILLE, the hot-bed and last retreat of the insurrection, held it a point of honor not to flag in the persecution directed against all priests and Brothers.

An order for the arrest of the Brother-Director was accordingly issued about the end of March, and fifteen men were detailed to carry out the doughty undertaking. It is noteworthy that by some diabolical refinement of anti-religious zeal, the arrest did not take place in the house, but in church, the federals thus procuring themselves the exquisite enjoyment of profaning the house of God while they persecuted one of His servants.

This prearranged sacrilege did not fail to rebound to the special honor of its originators, and the Brother-Director having mentioned its outrageous impropriety, was severely taken to task by the delegate before whom he had been brought, who furiously accused him of trying to proselytize within the very walls of the mayoralty. This and many other allegations gave rise to a long examination, the minutes of which, occupying several pages, were judged sufficiently important to authorize the detention of the pri-

soners, and their appearance before the High Court. Luckily enough, a man whose children had been at the Brothers' school, and who knew by experience how groundless were the accusations brought against the prisoners, violently opposed this measure. Flourens just then happened to come in, and with his usual quick way of cutting the gordian knot, went up to the Brother, seized him by the arm, and dragging him out of the hall, said peremptorily,

"Go home, and, above all, don't show yourself here again; it is not the place for men of your cloth."

Had the good religious been less zealous or less brave, he would have taken this advice as meant to warn him from a dangerous post; but the Brother-Director made light of the danger, and determined to stand by his flag until death. The community of Belleville, far from flinching, took counsel with their superiors, and agreed not to leave their post till driven from it by main force.

On the night of the 12th of April, about a quarter to ten, when all the Brothers were in bed, the citizen Prud'homme, one of the most zealous members of the Commune, surrounded the house with his National Guards, and summoned the inmates to open the doors. He had obtained the necessary order to arrest all the Brothers at one blow.

One of them, luckily, happened to have been for some time a school-fellow of his at the Mans seminary; they recognized each other, and Prud'homme, under the softening influence which the

memory of one's school-days always exercises on the mind, offered to allow the community a night's rest instead of immediate imprisonment in the police-court. The Brothers gladly availed themselves of this gracious reprieve ; sentries were placed at every door, a picket was ordered to occupy the porter's lodge, and Prud'homme left the house with a promise to allow the Brothers free egress till the morrow, provided they promised in return not to carry away any thing with them, and to leave only two Brothers behind, as teachers. Those he chose were his own former school-fellow and the Brother who had charge of the " first class."

The Brother-Director had willingly agreed to these conditions ; but a certain suspicious stir and whispering which occurred the following morning, and above all a glance at the school prospectus which the Commune proposed as a substitute for the former course of study, made him change his mind, and leave no one to bear the brunt of the coming struggle. The house was rid of its holy occupants before sunset, and therefore entirely at the disposal of the Commune.

Prud'homme soon repented his temporary clemency, and for some time patiently waited his victims' return, thinking one or other of them would surely venture back to save some of their possessions. He was, however, mistaken, as none of them risked a visit to such a dangerous place, when duty no longer demanded their presence. Self-interest could not draw them back, when self-devotion was no longer necessary, and seeing this, the delegate's fury broke loose, and a price

was set upon the Brothers' heads. Bills were posted all over Belleville, offering fifteen francs for the apprehension of a Brother, and thirty for that of the Brother-Director. The objects of his resentment had not even left the ward. They had been hospitably welcomed by a Christian family of the neighborhood, and having staid there in safety for a whole month, thought themselves sure of an asylum until better days should dawn. But alas! their hosts were soon warned that their house was suspected of harboring *the worst kind of clericals*; and as this rumor was sure, sooner or later, to reach the highest authorities, the Brothers deemed it prudent, as well for their own sake as for that of their friends, to leave their hiding-place without delay.

But where and how should they go? The Brother-Director thought it best to escape beyond the barriers of Paris. The usual disguises were procured, and each one set off to do the best he could for himself. With God's help, they all met again the same evening at St. Germain, at the house of a Monsieur Fleury, where they had agreed to rendezvous.

Having consulted with their superior, the Brothers again left this retreat for Noyon, where they remained until the 2d of June, when they were recalled to Paris, to open their schools again. One of them, Brother Germier, had not accompanied them, and staid in the Belleville quarter, doing all the good he could, and during the very last days of the Commune and Reign of Terror, went boldly to the mayoralty to claim all that was undestroyed among the plundered be-

longings of his house. Having described, in a letter which we have seen, the events of this last terrible week, especially in the quarter which he inhabited, Brother Germier, who, with incredible coolness and courage, had never ceased teaching in the Ménilmontant school, adds, "I take advantage of these last few days to collect together and bring back several things of ours which the Communists carried off and stored at the mayoralty. I am also having our rooms cleaned—they were in a filthy state—and a few beds prepared for the Brothers. I am also getting the classrooms ready, so that the children may not be allowed to run wild in the streets any longer." The simplicity and heroism of this conduct is beyond praise, when we remember under what circumstances these words were penned. Besides his anxiety for the safety of his colleagues (of whom he could get no news), he suffered cruelly on his own account. Blasphemous cries echoed from the loved house which prayer and godly connection had endeared to his heart; and worse than all, the innocent and blameless children, souls created in the image of God, were taught, before his very face, that *there is no God save matter*. This definition, which speaks for itself, is contained in a little book of which numberless copies were scattered about among the Brothers' little scholars. This was a profanation more heart-rending still, and before which that of sacred but inanimate objects paled in the sight of him who was so devoted to God's holy service.

II.

THE house had been ransacked, and bore every trace of the filthiest disorder. Not one room was fit to live in, and, indeed, the Brothers were obliged to sleep and eat out of their own house for ten days after their return. The school, however, was reopened on the 5th of June.

The terror inspired by the Commune had been such that not only was the Brothers' forcible eviction not opposed by a single voice on the part of the citizens, but even their most devoted adherents had not dared to show them the least token of sympathy, and for fear of compromising themselves, never said so much as "God speed!" to their friends. We shudder at this sad example of moral cowardice! It is almost better to have to do with open foes, whose strength and purpose are well known, than with these lukewarm, half-hearted friends who stand silently looking on at the evil deeds that their craven hearts still reprobate.

It was only on their return that the Brothers learnt how favorable to them was the public opinion of Belleville. It was the same in all the places where priests and nuns were hunted like wild beasts! When all was safe again, people were loud in their protestations of sympathy and regret. We incline to believe that a practical comparison between the old state of things and the new had much to do with this popular reaction in their favor. The reader will be able

to judge of this, by a sketch of the events that happened after the expulsion of the Brothers from the public schools.

Prud'homme considered his seminary education a guarantee of his fitness to regulate the teaching of youth. No one surpassed him—this we will own—in undermining every pious custom and religious principle instilled by the Brothers into the minds of their scholars.

On the day following the Brothers' departure, one of the children innocently asked if the opening prayer was to be said. Prud'homme jumped up in a towering passion, and frightened the child out of his wits, by swearing that the first boy who should mention God's name should be hung from the ceiling.

"Good Frenchmen and brave patriots," said he, "should know no other prayer than our national hymn."

So he started the *Marseillaise*, and the frightened children followed his lead at the top of their voices. The next thing the furious delegate proceeded to do was to seize a hammer, and calling to his aid several of the older boys, he smashed every crucifix, holy-water font, and statuette he could find; the younger children were ordered at the same time to pull down and tear the prints and devices. This done, the whole house was served in the same way; not a thing escaped the delegate's iconoclastic fury.

But this as yet was nothing: the word and teaching of God soon followed the palpable reminders of His goodness and mercy. Bibles, catechisms, sacred history books, were all ruth-

lessly destroyed, and in their stead was put a sort of little Masonic Catechism, of which we have already quoted the opening words, and whose very title, "God judged by Science ; or, Religion *versus* Freemasonry ; by Edward Rouillier," sufficiently showed its unfitness for an infant mind, even though it had not been full of the most infamous and corrupt propositions.

It would be hard to describe the amount of blasphemy and lies which the author has crowded into those eighteen tiny pages, the front of which contains the following doctrines :

"That the only true, useful, necessary, and possible knowledge of God is found in true science ;

"That the knowledge of God, as taught by theology, in the recesses of seminaries, and in the gloom of the altar, is a lamentable error ;

"That theology and metaphysics are out of date ; and

"That the reign of positivism has begun, the golden age has dawned, science is the mistress of the world !"

Poor science ! poor world, indeed ! we do not quite perceive how such doctrines will contribute to the progress of science or the happiness of the world ; and wonder how—putting doctrine aside—such subjects could have been seriously and deliberately set before the mind of infants !

Free-thinkers pretend—and make this dictum the chief accusation against ecclesiastical schools—that a child's liberty of conscience must be guaranteed, and that before he reaches the age of reason, he should therefore be taught no belief.

We might retort that this system is precisely the same as that which should deprive a babe of its mother's milk, until it should be old enough to choose its own food for itself! But let us drop this argument, and carry the war into the enemy's country. You forbid us to sow in the child's mind the seed of our forefathers' belief; because, forsooth, you respect his right to choose between God and matter? Well, so be it; but are you not bound to leave him equally free, and not teach him your system till he can choose it of his own accord? *You* are to have the right of teaching error and darkness, where we are denied the right of carrying the light of truth! *You* are to speak of our God to insult Him, while *we* are forbidden to speak of Him, that we may make His name known and loved! The unfairness of this plan is too evident, and here as well as elsewhere we recognize the singular talent, which the Communists always displayed, for securing the "lion's share."

Besides the little book we have mentioned above, the newspaper, "*Père Duchêne*," was the teachers' favorite literature. No doubt the filthy language and the plentiful blasphemies of this distinguished sheet gave a high seasoning to their daily instructions. We question whether this unfortunately too popular style was calculated to elevate the standard of thought among the working classes. Luckily the experiment was too short to be thoroughly successful!

Those disquisitions on "clericals," and "black-gowns," not proving sufficiently highly spiced for

the ambitious successors of the Christian Brothers, they adopted a yet more efficacious plan, and composed short dictations to be addressed to the pupils, containing edifying allusions to the former teachers. A few of these, left astray on the desks, fell into the writer's hands. We respect our readers' modesty too much to copy them *verbatim*, and will only say, that every folly and impiety of the eighteenth century is here dressed in a modern garb, and conveyed in a style so utterly unsuited to childhood that even the writers of such balderdash are forced to appeal to the "Citizens," "Fathers of families," thus showing clearly that the boy is only held as a go-between, an intelligent parrot, whose business it is to take home these infamous sheets, and introduce them into the household. In this way did the Communists make use of the home influence of childhood, which the Brothers had employed so differently, and with such different results for years!

The new teachers, however, only succeeded in over-reaching themselves; for the principles which they would fain have made popular only disgusted and demoralized the children, and even frightened the parents.

Many of the latter noticing anxiously, and not without good cause, the spirit of insubordination and the foul language which were gaining ground among the young people, and finding that revolutionary principles, glibly repeated by thoughtless children, had the effect of undermining paternal authority and domestic peace, did not hesitate in most instances to go to the root of the evil, by

forbidding the little ones to go to school at all. The classes were deserted little by little, and the discouraged masters wondered what spells those Brothers threw over their scholars to keep them at school! A natural spell enough, and one which the zeal, affection, and kindness of the followers of De La Salle soon brought into use again when they reopened their schools. The rising generation was soon collected once more at the foot of the crucifix, and the delighted parents gratefully acknowledged that the Brothers were the only teachers fitted to educate the children of the working-classes.

The municipality is not behindhand in treating them with all possible consideration, and we may say with truth in the words of Holy Writ,

“As gold is refined in the furnace,” so the crucible of adversity has enhanced the value of the Christian Brothers in the eyes of the people, and proved their fortitude in the eyes of God.

ARBITRARY ARRESTS

UNDER

THE COMMUNE.

I.

*A Journey to St. Denis—The Brave Captain of Batignolles—Devot-
edness of a Mayoralty Official.*

As soon as Paris became accessible to outsiders, our novitiate in the Rue Oudinot was besieged with Brothers, who came from all sides to see with their own eyes whether our house had escaped the general wreck. They had all feared for this cradle of the order, which they knew had been abandoned by the directors, and which they dreaded could not escape the flames and smoke which they had seen hanging over the devoted capital like a funeral pall.

They feared to find the house a shapeless mass of ruins, and were overjoyed, when they came, to find it full of their colleagues. It was a great day when we all met and compared notes with each other, having under our very eyes the broken crucifixes and statues as witnesses of the dangers through which we had passed, and the providential escapes which we had accomplished.

Every one had a story of thrilling interest to tell, and we soon learnt each other's experiences during the terrible days that were past. I will

begin by giving a sketch of the adventures that befell our brethren of Clichy.

The Clichy house went through every kind of vexation : it was broken into, searched, sacked, and finally turned into a powder-magazine. The Brothers were arbitrarily arrested ; the balls and shells rained around the garden and cloisters, and once a formal order was given to set fire to the establishment. We will let Brother—— tell his own story :

“ No one,” he says, “ thought of deserting his post during the bloody struggle. There were eight of us, and we all continued to wear our habit and teach in the school.

“ On the 20th of April, we received a letter from Brother Albert, the Visitor, telling us that he was at St. Denis, and would be rejoiced to hear some news of us. He also begged us to tell him what we knew of our colleagues of Levallois and Neuilly. This letter was brought to the Brother-Director by a brave lady, the sister of the Brother-Purveyor of St. Denis. He was about to intrust her with the answer, when Brother A—— and I begged him to let us take an answer in person. We reminded him of the delight this surprise would cause Brother Albert, and told him that under the circumstances a personal interview would be of more use than a mere letter. The Brother-Director somewhat hesitatingly granted our request, recommending straightforward answers if we were questioned, and bidding us keep to the high-road, and turn back at the first serious obstacle with which we should meet. Taking his letter to the Visitor,

we started on Sunday, the 23d of April, at one o'clock. It was the day of the Good Shepherd.

"Every thing seemed to favor us at first. The people, and even the National Guards whom we passed, looked kindly upon us and bowed; we began to be ashamed of having been afraid; we might soon be laughing at our own fears.

" 'Halt!' suddenly cried a sentry on the outpost of a group of National Guards, near the Mayoralty of St. Ouen, 'where is your permit?'

" 'We have none,' said we, and prepared to turn back at once.

" 'Why don't you ask for one at the mayoralty? They will not refuse you leave to go about as peaceable citizens,' was the man's rejoinder. This advice seemed sound, and we followed it. We obtained the requisite permit without difficulty, and, once more reassured as to our fate, we started again. We did not know that this paper, however formal it might be, had but a relative value, and that the whim of a drunken sot wearing the Communist's uniform, was of sufficient weight to render invalid the most solemnly attested legal document in the world. We learnt this sad fact at the junction of the Northern Railroad and the Rue de la Révolte. Two warriors, the one a sergeant, the other a corporal, leaped from a carriage coming at racing speed from the direction of St. Ouen. Brandishing their muskets and revolvers, and barring the road, they cried out,

" 'Where are you going?'

" 'To St. Denis.'

“ ‘ Exactly—that you may betray us to the Versailles troops.’

“ ‘ Not at all ; simply to see one of our superiors.’

“ ‘ Oh ! your stories are well known, but they won’t get over us.’

“ The sergeant made a furious dive at my permit.

“ ‘ Your paper is good for nothing ; the man who signed it had no authority to do so. It was either a mistake or it was treachery, and he shall pay dearly for his folly. Follow us to the picket.’

“ We wished now that we had turned back at St. Ouen, as our Brother-Director had urged us to do when he told us to avoid unnecessary danger. It was too late to repent now. The captain of the picket was away ; but his men knew well enough where to put their hands upon him. He was soon before us, drunk and staggering, swearing and hiccoughing at the same time, glaring with inflamed eyes upon us, and growling against the rascals who could not give him a moment’s rest. We were inclined to agree with him there ; it was not of our own accord that we had disturbed him.

“ ‘ Look sharp ! ’ he cried gruffly. ‘ Four men and a corporal, take these fellows to the Montmartre Committee.’ And without more ado, he faced toward the tavern once more.

“ ‘ But, captain,’ we called after him, ‘ we are citizens of Clichy.’

“ He did not hear us, but our protest was not in vain,

“ ‘To Montmartre!’ cried some.

“ ‘No, to Clichy,’ said others; ‘they are right; if they belong to Clichy, let them go to Clichy.’

“ A stalwart man, with a stentorian voice, rushed after the captain, and overtaking him, said,

“ ‘Captain, it is to Clichy, not to Montmartre, these citizens must go.’

“ ‘Let them go anywhere, and leave me in peace,’ said the captain, as he pursued his way. A few men surrounded us and hurried us back to Clichy. We were taken to the mayoralty, where our identity was proved, and where we met the Brother-Director whom rumor had already acquainted with our case. The corporal under whose guardianship we were delivered us over to him, having first made us sign an agreement not to leave the house for two or three days. This formality caused us no little apprehension. The corporal looked wicked, and we were soon to learn the reason why he had exacted this promise. We had begun to flatter ourselves that the matter had blown over, when this man made his appearance once more, having only gone to headquarters, to solicit stricter decrees against us. He brought back with him a warrant summoning us to appear before the committee sitting at Batignolles. The Brother-Director tried in vain to smother his grief; he could not tell whether he should ever see us again; nevertheless we were obliged to leave him and follow the pitiless corporal. A short time before this second arrest and just after the first, the Brother-Director had ad-

dressed himself to Monsieur Dubois, an official of the mayoralty, but a man devoted to our house. He had laid the case before him and asked his advice. Monsieur Dubois had reassured him, and told him to trust to him, should the worst come to the worst.

“I had not forgotten this, and begged our jailer to stop on our way, that I might see Monsieur Dubois; the request was peremptorily refused. We were walking between four bayonets, the corporal strutting in front in high glee at the feat he had achieved. The people, however, flocked to see us pass, not jeering, but sympathizing; our children’s parents were deeply affected, and here and there we heard threats, murmurs, and cries of ‘Shame!’ We felt comforted, but our corporal was furious. So it continued till we arrived at the city gates, when Monsieur Dubois met us. The secretary of his office had told him what had happened, and he had set off to overtake us. The drawbridge would not be lowered for another hour, and our friend made use of that time to endeavor to soften our guards. It was to no purpose. Threats, entreaties, orders were of no avail. The authority of the law paled before that of the soldiers in those days, and at last the corporal cried out impatiently,

“‘My orders are peremptory, and I mean to execute them to the letter. If you interfere by so much as another word, I will order my men to fire on you.’ Our protector was forcibly silenced, but consoled himself with the hope that by accompanying us to the tribunal, he would be

able to free us. New disappointment! The drawbridge was lowered, escort and prisoners crossed over, but Monsieur Dubois was at once stopped by the sentries. He told them of his official position, and of his presence here on business.

“ ‘Your permit?’ ”

“ He had none, and all the other papers he exhibited failed to satisfy the sentry. Monsieur Dubois was forced to go home to his mayoralty, while we were hurried to Batignolles. We were supported by faith in Him without whose permission not a hair falls from our heads, and also by these parting words of our kind friend, ‘Whatever happens, don’t get anxious. If you are not free by to-morrow, I will come and claim your persons.’ ”

“ Our corporal handed us over to the picket of the Batignolles Mayoralty, commanded by a captain of the Thirty-third Battalion, and went in alone to speak to the committee. The captain took us into a little room that served as his office, and having heard the circumstances of our arrest, gave rein to his indignation.

“ ‘It is lamentable—unheard of!’ he said. ‘The wretches will ruin us and themselves. They are hurrying us on to destruction. We wish that the words *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*, should be real things, not mere sounds, and how do they justify these ridiculous arrests—fourteen in one day, as to-day, for instance? What honest man could bear such a system? As for me and my men, we have had enough of it.’ ”

"On hearing the corporal's voice outside, calling for us, we stepped out among the soldiers.

" 'Here,' said the man, 'is an order to carry these citizens to the Central Police-Court; please to detail the men who will execute it, captain.'

" 'None of my men feel inclined to interfere in such matters,' said the captain.

" 'But the committee?'

" 'When the committee order the arrest of villains or traitors, they may rely on our concurrence; but if they choose to worry peaceable and loyal citizens, they may look for jailers and hangmen anywhere else, but not in our ranks.'

"The corporal grew pale with shame and anger, and ordered us out of the place.

" 'What are you going to do with us?' I asked.

" 'Oh! do not concern yourselves,' he answered sneeringly, concealing his fury for fear of exciting the sympathy of the guards in our favor. 'I am going to take you to the Central Police-Court, where you will be confronted with the *employé* of St. Ouen, who gave you an illegal permit. It is he who is principally to blame, and he shall pay for all.'

"This was a downright lie. The *employé* had not even been arrested, and there was no one to confront us with. Seeing a hack, the corporal 'confiscated' it, and putting us inside, drove off. We reached the court at eleven o'clock; the old clock in St. Louis' Palace was just striking the hour.

II.

The Central Police-Court—A Night in Prison—A Commissary's Kindness.

"WE were taken up-stairs into a large, ill-lighted room, where a man sat alone at a table loaded with meat and wine. He interrupted his hearty supper to take from the corporal the papers relating to our arrest, and left the room to consult his superiors. He came back in ten minutes, and took us to the secretary's office on the ground floor.

"This man very civilly begged us to be seated while the corporal made his accusation, during which he said much the same as the captain at Batignolles, as to the folly of such conduct. This over, he pushed the paper and inkstand toward our accuser and said shortly,

" 'Make your report and leave us.'

"As soon as we were alone with the secretary, I rose and stood near his desk, asking the question,

" 'What do you think of our case, monsieur?'

" 'I think,' said he contemptuously, pointing to the corporal's papers, 'that among all this, there is not one serious accusation—except perhaps this: that you were going to St. Denis to tell the Versailles troops that there was a powder-magazine in your house, so that they might fire on it and blow up the whole neighborhood.'

"We protested loudly; but controlling my temper, I answered,

" 'This accusation will not hold water, as you will soon see. True, we have a powder-magazine in the house which the National Guards have put there to our great discomfort; but we have six of our community and our superior himself (who sent us to St. Denis) in the house, where we were to have gone back to-night. We should be made to deliberately plan our own destruction. Besides, we are fond of our poor neighbors, and they of us. Do you suppose we should wantonly devote their persons and property to useless destruction? '

" 'True,' assented the secretary, 'I think it extremely unlikely.'

"He was silent for a few minutes; then said, in a tone of dejection,

" 'I fear the stupid zeal of some of us will ruin us all. If it was not so late, gentlemen, I would take it upon myself to release you at once; but since at this late hour, you are better off here than in the streets, you had better wait till to-morrow. The commissary himself will then set you free, which, after all, will be more proper. I will send for mattresses for you.'

"We thanked him, but preferred remaining in our arm-chairs. Neither the secretary nor we cared to sleep much, so we amicably discussed the matter, and I told him how well the people and the National Guards of Clichy had behaved.

" 'It is the duty of every one,' he said, 'to protect honorable and peaceable men.'

"The secretary's kindly manner emboldened

me to ask a question that had been on the tip of my tongue ever since we had entered the police-court.

“ ‘We have had no news from our Paris houses for several weeks,’ I hazarded, ‘and are very anxious about the possible fate of some of our superiors, particularly an old man, Brother Calixtus. We heard that he had been arrested, and have had no further news. Could you tell us, therefore, whether he is here or at Mazas?’

“The secretary carefully examined his books.

“ ‘His name is not down on the list,’ he said, ‘and I conclude that he has not been imprisoned, probably not even arrested. But others of your colleagues have been, and some are still in confinement.’

“At last, sleep got the better of us, and we were forced to drop the conversation. It was daylight when we woke, and though we were stiff and tired, we could not deny that worse might have happened to us than a night’s confinement in the police-court. The commissary came about nine o’clock, and hardly had he glanced over the report of our case, prepared by the secretary, than he said,

“ ‘You are perfectly free, gentlemen, to go where you like.’

“I remarked that we knew too much now, not to be anxious to have our papers duly attested.

“ ‘You mean,’ he said smilingly, ‘that you would like a permit? Certainly, you have a right to one; here it is.’

“ ‘We have one more request to make,’ I added, ‘and your kindness emboldens us. Clichy is

very far, we are very tired, and our friends must be anxious about us. A carriage would therefore not be an unnecessary luxury, if we only had two francs to pay for it as far as the gates.'

"The commissary kindly sent for a hack, and gave us two francs.

" 'We will repay you when we come to thank you,' was our parting promise. And we started at a great pace, till, on passing a bridge, we met Monsieur Dubois, and told him what happened. He was unfeignedly glad, and shaking hands with us said,

" 'So my task is reduced to a formality?'

"We asked him to go back to the police-court with us and thank the commissary, at the same time begging him to become our creditor for the two francs, and thus discharge our obligation to the kind-hearted magistrate.

This done, we went on to the Hotel de Ville, or the City Hall, where Monsieur Dubois wished to get us some paper from the supreme authority which would secure us against further aggressions.

" 'So you like these "black-gowns"?' said one of the officials indulgently.

" 'Very much, and so do all the decent people of Clichy.'

" 'Well then, keep them with you as long as you choose.'

"Thus ended the matter, and our kind friend was radiant as he came back to us and accompanied us home.

"We had not been away very long, yet we found things worse than we had left them the

previous day. The fire from the batteries was twice as fierce, and shells were bursting on all sides. Musketry was incessant, and the walls and shop-fronts were torn to pieces by the frequent projectiles. We had good reason to tremble for our own safety, since we were literally standing on a volcano, and the least spark might have caused an explosion. The Commune had sent two barrels of powder, four hundred shells, and half a dozen cases of cartridges, to be stored at Clichy; and our house proving convenient, the dangerous stores had been piled up in the parlor. The Brother-Director having remarked that the smallest missile they were raining all around us, would cause the whole neighborhood to blow up, the Communist chieftain answered with a brutal laugh,

“ ‘Well, you will all go up in good company.’

“ ‘But think of our children, our pupils!’

“ ‘Well, they will jump higher than the rest; that is natural enough at their age.’

“ The Director, though trying to smile at these jokes, gained his point and succeeded in getting the powder, etc., removed to the cellar. He superintended the removal himself; for such was the carelessness of those employed in the work that an accident was by no means unlikely. The danger was now lessened, though the firing still continued on all sides, and we really seemed oppressed by a living nightmare.”

III.

The Adventures of a Belgian Brother—His Presence of Mind saves his Life.

ONE of our Brothers at last grew so nervous that he begged to be sent to Belgium, his native country, where he hoped to find that rest which his health absolutely required. The Brother-Director and Monsieur Dubois accordingly escorted him out of town, intending not to leave him before he reached St. Denis, or some other safe place. His papers were duly signed, but the unluckly Mayoralty of St. Ouen was destined once more to become our stumbling-block. A wicked-looking corporal—corporals seemed peculiarly fatal to our poor Brothers—loftily ignoring the permit, stopped the carriage and told the occupants that they could go no further. Monsieur Dubois wished to proceed and take no notice, but the man seized the horses' heads and tried to turn them back. Just then the adjutant comes up, and, with a voice husky with rage, cries out, "I command you to bring the carriage into the mayoralty court-yard." There was nothing for it but to give way. Monsieur Dubois entered the office to make a complaint and explain matters, but the Brother-Director was kept out among the guards, exposed to their drunken jests. One of them forced a rifle into his hands. "I have no objection," said the Brother, smiling; "I don't know much about the handling of this toy; but I should not need many lessons, if my country required

me to use it in her defense." The Brother's frank and steadfast look, and his simple, forcible words, shamed the federals out of their brutality, and he was left unmolested.

The Belgian Brother had meanwhile found a friend and fellow-countryman in the adjutant, and aided by sundry glasses of brandy, was quietly negotiating for his liberation. The Flemish tongue, together with this liquid seasoning, worked wonders, and the adjutant offered to see his compatriot as far as St. Denis, as, by going himself, he could protect him from any further vexation or insult. Monsieur Dubois and the Brother-Director were left at liberty to return to Clichy, which they were not slow in doing. It was lucky, for they had scarcely left when a hurried order came, to send the Brother-Director to Mazas Prison. The Belgian Brother had not yet left when this order arrived.

Furious at having missed a victim which a higher authority had thus delivered over to them, the National Guards wreaked their vengeance on the remaining prisoner. Instead of taking him to St. Denis, as they had promised, they dragged him from the Committee at Montmartre to the Central Police-Court, then to the Belgian Embassy, and from the embassy back to the police-court, under pretext of having his papers signed again. The poor man was distracted; this journey did not certainly bid fair to give him the peace he sought. At last he was taken back to St. Ouen, and after another disagreeable delay at that post, was finally sent off in the direction of St. Denis, whence he easily reached Noyon.

IV.

The Brothers in the Communist Ambulances—Terrible Death of Colonel Lenfant—The Powder-Magazine saved.

THE march of events was rapid ; the Communists lost ground day by day ; the hour of our deliverance was at hand ; but the struggle only grew the fiercer and the number of victims increased daily.

On the tenth of May, we were summoned to attend the wounded at the Ambulance of the Sisters of Charity. The Brother-Director appealed to our bravery and devotedness ; we all gladly responded, and it was settled that we should relieve one another day and night at this true Christian work of mercy. God be thanked, we never shrank one moment before our terrible task, which we accomplished under all sorts of disadvantages up to the very day of the Versailles troops' entrance into Paris.

What fearful sights afflicted our eyes ! What terrible deaths shocked our Christian feelings ! For instance, the citizen Lenfant, a federal colonel, came to Clichy to strengthen the position of the Commune, already tottering as it then was. This man shrugged his shoulders as he spoke of the asses who had preceded him ; things would have been very different, had *he* been called sooner ! While planning grand things for the defense of the post, and waiting for an opportunity of displaying his military talent, he took care to line his pockets well, and, as greedy as he was boast-

ful, he fixed his efforts particularly on the house of General Begnier (the Emperor's first *aide-de-camp*), which he ransacked from top to bottom. On the 12th of May, this wretched man was struck by a ball which went clean through his body, as he lay in bed. He was indeed not worthy to die a soldier's death, even in a bad cause. He was taken to the ambulance and died the third day. After he had been placed in his coffin, a woman purporting to be his wife ordered a lighted taper to be put on each side of the corpse. A citizen who happened to come in shortly after this, was terribly shocked, and delivered himself thus concerning the "outrage":

"What! place candles, the symbol of a religious idea, at the head of a brave fellow who all his life was proud of having no creed and following no ritual! Why, it is an insult to his memory! Let the candles be removed."

At these words, the wife ordered the coffin to be put in the ground, as quickly and unconcernedly as if it had been a dog's.

We were nearing the end. On the morning of the 22d of May, two artillery-men sent by Dombrowski demanded admittance to our house. Their business was to set fire to the powder-magazine in the cellar. Dombrowski, when he gave this order, was determined to be revenged on the Thirty-fourth Battalion, which had refused to leave Clichy to guard the ramparts. The two artillery-men had been well paid for their hellish mission; but man proposes and God disposes. One of the men suddenly said to the other,

"By the by! what have these National

Guards done? They would not leave their own district; where's the harm? Since Clichy had to be guarded, too, was it not better to intrust the task to them than to strangers? I have made up my mind that I'll not fire the magazine."

"Very well," said his comrade, "do as you like. I am not going to steal my money. I can do the job alone."

"I tell you, you shall not. I've been thinking it over; it's a wicked thing to do, and you shall not do it any more than I shall."

"Indeed! who is to prevent me from executing my orders?"

"Myself."

"Come, you are joking; let us go on——"

"You shall not go. Enough! if you put another foot forward, I will blow your brains out." And the man cocked his revolver.

"Ah! you think you can frighten me!" said the other.

"Not at all. I know you are too plucky for that. I will convince you by arguments, not by fright. Trust me, we had better not burden our consciences with a crime so utterly useless."

"Well, now, perhaps you are right, after all! *That* will not save the Commune, and it will make hundreds of innocent victims."

"Just so! let us cut!"

We all heard this dialogue, and seeing the men leave the neighborhood, threw ourselves on our knees to thank God for our escape. A few hours later, we were welcoming our own troops, who overran the whole house, to our mutual delight.

NOTES
ON THE
ARREST, IMPRISONMENT, AND RELEASE
OF THE
BROTHERS OF ST. NICHOLAS OF ISSY.

SIR: You have asked me for a few of the details of our arrest and imprisonment ; I am most happy to gratify your curiosity. I think that by going back a few months, I can show you how little our Brotherhood, with its essentially popular character, deserved the peculiarly brutal treatment which it received at the hands of the mob.

Toward the beginning of September, 1870, the rumors of an approaching siege caused us to disperse the nine hundred scholars which our house at Vaugirard generally harbors.

A detachment of Brothers—the full number of the community was sixty—remained to take care of an ambulance or temporary hospital we had ourselves organized, and where for four months a hundred and ten soldiers were cared for and fed wholly at our expense. The rest of the community, about forty in number, went to other hospitals or battle-fields as litter-bearers.

As soon as peace was concluded, we set to work to repair the damages caused by the Prussian shells. On the 1st of March, 1871, to the great delight of

the parents, we reopened our schools for boys. We already had three hundred scholars, when, on the 1st of May, the house was broken into by the Sixty-fourth Battalion of National Guards. Shells began to rain round us again, and we felt bound to send the children back to their homes. Those whose parents lived out of Paris, we sent to our great house at Vaugirard.

More than sixty shells fell on the house and garden of St. Nicholas during the first week in May; but for all that, we had three battalions of the National Guard quartered upon us, and fed them well too, while there were also a hundred and fifty wounded men requiring our care. On Sunday, the 7th of May, I had in the house, besides six Brothers whose services were no longer required, twenty-one young gardeners, whose lives were seriously endangered. It was my duty to provide for their safety. I intended to take them to our farm at Igny, which was under my jurisdiction, and where they could wait for better times, while at the same time they could find congenial employment. I communicated my plan to Monsieur Regère, commandant of the One Hundred and Forty-sixth Battalion, and who, with his staff, had been quartered in one of our best rooms for the last four days. Both he and Monsieur Crosse, his adjutant, seemed very well disposed toward us. He quite approved my plan. Since it was impossible to cross the lines of the Versailles troops, it was settled that we had better go through Charenton, and skirting the city (which was the shortest way), turn back again toward Igny. He gave us a

formal permit, and so did Monsieur Minarî, the Mayor of Issy. I left four Brothers in the house, partly to watch proceedings, partly to look after the wounded. Nine of our oldest employees who suffered as much from the insolence of the National Guards as any of ourselves, also remained to help the Brothers. Monsieur l'Abbé Armat, our chaplain, who had devoted himself to the spiritual care of the wounded and dying federals all through the war, was loth to leave his post, and so did not accompany us ; but the very same day, Monday, a Freemason visited the ambulance, and found him there. The man raved and stormed, saying it was incredible that another clerical should still be found in this neighborhood. The priest had to leave the same night, and hid himself with some friends in Paris. Had he remained a moment longer, he would probably have been shot. We started at eight o'clock in the morning, on Monday, the 8th of May. Two Brothers from the ward-school of Issy had joined our company ; one of them was afterward killed on his escape from Mazas Prison ; the other was wounded. We were twenty-nine in all. The sentries at Issy and Vannes let us pass without even a question ; but at Montrouge the officer in charge, a sub-lieutenant of the fourth company of the One Hundred and Fourteenth Battalion, an ill-favored, saturnine man, made us prisoners, under the pretense that his colonel must himself see our permit. I saw that we had fallen into a trap. At noon we were taken three hundred yards further, and put into a large shed, where the colonel, we were told, would

soon come to us. At half-past four, a captain on some "staff," with a harsh voice and an unpleasant manner, appeared on horseback; then a commissary on foot, whose outward man reminded me of an escaped convict; then two more commissaries in a carriage. A cab was also brought, and all our parcels and bags politely stowed away, to relieve us of them (?) We never saw them again. They contained our most necessary clothing and that of our employees. Unfortunately, some of the bags also contained a few articles of church plate which we had carried off, fearing that our house might be pillaged or set on fire during our absence. If our baggage was put into a cab, we, on the other hand, had to foot it all the way.

We were placed in double file, and surrounded by National Guards of the Sixty-fifth Battalion, who, it is only just to say, behaved much better than those of the One Hundred and Fourteenth. The captain in a hoarse voice ordered them to shoot us at the slightest sign of resistance. This was quite superfluous; for our young friends, one of whom was hardly fourteen, were frightened out of their wits, and surely not without good cause. We Brothers tried to be as quiet and resigned as it was possible for poor human nature to be under the circumstances.

The lieutenant commanding the escort was a fine young man of twenty-five, who seemed quite proud of the task assigned him. We were taken from Montrouge to the police-court, through the main street of Vannes, and Maine avenue, etc. In the more populous districts, a halt was often

purposely made, that we might be gazed upon by the bystanders. The people were told that we were Versailles prisoners, and had fired on the National Guards, and a thousand other lies that excited them and made them insult us the more. The furious cries of "Death to them!" grew worse as we reached the fortifications, and got into the faubourg of Vannes. Here, had not the National Guards kept them off, several women, true viragoes, would fain have torn out our eyes and bitten our noses off. Allow me to interrupt my narrative a moment, to tell you how the conduct of the crowd saddened our hearts. True, we did not wear our habit; but our guards proclaimed loudly enough that we were Brothers, and it was impossible that I especially, who, in my public capacity, have had to do with so many men, should not have been recognized. I learnt afterward that I had been. "So," I said to myself, "this is the way you are rewarded by the very class to whose interests you have devoted thirty-six years of incessant labor."

I am glad to say that many of our pupils did what their parents should have done; they bowed or stretched out their hands, but our guards pushed them violently back. I am also bound to say that the further we got into the city, the better was the change noticeable in the crowd. We saw many sad faces and a great number of women holding their handkerchiefs to their eyes.

Near the gates of the Luxembourg we met one of the Brother-Directors who was a special friend of mine; he was in plain clothes, and, anxious to see what this new pageant was, he min-

gled with the crowd. He recognized me at once, and with tears in his eyes gave me a look of sympathy which I immediately returned; but our guards having noticed this, seized him, and putting him between four National Guards, compelled him to follow us on our way to the Central Police-Court. What shall I say of this terrible place, which, if I lived for centuries, I never could forget?

It is no doubt a pity that this fine building should have been burned down; but, indeed, nothing else could cleanse it from the foul air, heavy with obscenity and blasphemy, that clung about its halls and corridors. Such language seemed to be the daily common talk of the men who sat there as magistrates, and we seem yet to hear the disgusting echo of it afflicting our ears.

We were most brutally treated, and the thought of what our blessed Lord suffered for us was all that kept me resigned under such insults. While I was standing perfectly defenseless, some one struck me a violent blow on the head, and if a little urchin of ten or twelve did not buffet me and spit in my face, it was certainly not from the want of encouragement on the part of one of our guards, probably his father. Another federal put his revolver to my temple, and threatened to blow my brains out if I but stirred a hand's breadth.

We were thoroughly searched, and every thing we possessed taken from us. Besides the slender funds of the house, I had on me various small sums, collected penny by penny, and each destined to some particular work of charity, such as

that of the propagation of the faith. The wretches actually crowed over this "find." I was sorry to lose the money, but far more to know what a vile use they would doubtless make of it. Our poor employees lost the last penny of their savings, and our young gardener was actually robbed of his single one-franc piece (about twenty cents).

I must pass over many details of this dreadful, endless night, partly because it would take me too long to relate them, partly because decency forbids my mentioning some of them. I spoke but little to these men, but my very looks seemed to irritate them ; three times I was confined in a separate and dark room, because I did not discreetly look away from our guards. I told one man who threw this in my face, that people whose conscience was light could afford to hold their heads high. Another asked me why I had doffed my habit ?

I told him " because I pleased, and I supposed that under a republic I could at least enjoy the liberty of choosing my own dress." He answered that I had done well to leave off that " garment of iniquity." Another individual before whom I was cited immediately after this, seemed to me a butcher's apprentice. He had the physique of one, mighty, nervous arms and a herculean frame. He liked to display the former ; for the sleeves of his scarlet flannel shirt were tucked up far above the elbows. This "judge" asked me almost the same questions, even that about my habit. I answered him in the same strain as I had used with his comrade ; only this

man, instead of calling the habit ignominious, called it a noble badge.

I answered him thus: "So noble do I esteem it, citizen, that I shrink from exposing it to the insults it too surely provokes in these days."

After being questioned, searched, and robbed, we were thrown pell-mell into a room where ten persons would barely have had room to circulate. I have said elsewhere that we were twenty-nine. In my capacity of head of the troop, I was put into a small wooden closet, ill-smelling to a degree, whence I could hear every thing that was going on around me. We were just beginning to feel rested, when one of our persecutors again appeared on the scene, a man who had declared before our young men that he was Thouret, the great-nephew of the elder Thouret, of Terrorist memory, and that he burned to emulate his great-uncle's example. He evidently told us a lie; for, from what we learned subsequently, I concluded that it was Dacosta or Raoul Rigault with whom we had been confronted. This Citizen "Thouret" having desired the Brothers to stand while he spoke, and having intimated to them that before the throne of God, the last should be first, and the first last, made them a speech according to his preaching humor. He heaped the vilest epithets on us; then turning to the young men, who scarcely paid attention to him, told them that the Brothers had misinformed them. They had told them that there was a God, which was false; there was no such thing as eternity, and no such place as hell; God's justice was a myth, but man's was to be feared, and man's only. Then came the

most awful blasphemies against God, our Blessed Lady, and the saints, after which he said, "I am but one man, you cowards, and you are many; why don't you attack me? None of you dare do it!" This was the courage of the men of the Commune. Having sneeringly wished us good-night, Citizen Thouret slammed the door behind him with such violence that the whole house shook. A few moments later, a company of National Guards came to escort us to the "depot." It was now three o'clock. At the "depot" we found a number of our Brothers, and could talk with them at our leisure. It was a paradise compared to the prison whence we had just come; but our joy was soon rudely disturbed by an abrupt order, on the eleventh of May, commanding us to be taken to Mazas Prison. Only the Brothers were thus sentenced, and it was a sore trial to be torn from our employees, and especially the young apprentices whose guardian and father I considered myself to be. I tried to hope that these youths would soon regain their freedom; for after all, what had they done, and had they not already undergone trials enough, an imprisonment of four days and the loss of the little they possessed? But I was mistaken; for on the following day, Friday, they were brought to Mazas, where their imprisonment lasted as long as our own.

My cell was a small room, six feet by nine. The furniture was scarcely luxurious, consisting of a table fixed into the wall, and a chair fastened to it with a chain; a watering-pot filled with water, which served for drinking as well as washing, a hammock in lieu of a bed, a mattress and

two coverlets. A very small window let in just enough air not to suffocate me. Of course, as I have said, every sacred thing, books, rosaries, Bibles, etc., had all been taken from us at the police-court, and I had not even been able to save a little medal of our Lady, the gift of an old friend, and from which I had never parted for thirty-six years. It was far more precious to me than all the money I possessed. In this spiritual desolation, I was overjoyed to find in the table-drawer a little book of devotion. I knew that my friend, and the friend of all the prisoners and soldiers of this terrible place, Monsieur Germainville, had done me this service. The good man little knew what a treasure his "Christian's Manual" would one day prove to me, and I myself, who had often handled it when I was free, little suspected the comfort it would one day procure me. It is a blessed work to supply the poor prisoner with good books.

On Monday, the 15th, I was brought before the magistrate, a youth of eighteen, for all that he put on such a serious and contemptuous air. With a look of infinite self-importance he glanced over the written accusations made against us (which, to judge from their volume, must have been very serious), and proceeded to ask all kinds of silly questions, to which I answered as patiently as I could. He also spoke about my not wearing my habit, and suddenly said,

"Prisoner, what are you accused of?"

"I should be glad if you could tell me what," I retorted; "for to this day I have failed to discover my crime."

He said no more, and there ended my interrogatory. As I noticed that the youth—for he was not worthy of the title of magistrate—was dictating a report of my case to a registrar or clerk much older than himself, and much less self-sufficient, I hazarded a few words.

“I beg, monsieur,” I said, “that what I am about to say may be mentioned in the report.”

“What is it?” he asked.

“This: that my colleagues and myself have been shamefully treated at the Central Police-Court; and especially that, being perfectly defenseless, I was violently struck on the head.”

He agreed that this was illegal, and the clerk went so far as to pity us. Then the “judge,” having inserted my complaint in the report, made the following remark:

“It is true, however, that priests and Brothers have done so much harm to the republic that these outrages, though illegal, are excusable.”

“Are you quite sure,” I asked, “that the Brothers have done harm to the republic?”

“Oh! undoubtedly,” he answered.

“Well,” said I, raising my voice, “allow me to make one remark. Four months ago, the republic was already proclaimed, and the newspapers, even the most ‘advanced’ sheets, had no words with which adequately to express their admiration for the Brothers.”

He interrupted me, saying that we certainly had behaved well on the battle-field, and were entitled to great praise on that account. I answered,

“And pray what have we done since, to for-

feit this praise and be vilely imprisoned as we are at present? What we did four months ago, we were doing again only a fortnight since. We had six hundred wounded at Longchamps, and nursed them just as devotedly under the Commune as we should under any other government. ”

Then I gave him an account of our occupations, nine days ago, at our house at Issy, and bowing to him, took my leave. I had already made acquaintance with our good jailers, who, luckily for us, were by no means Communists. The Brothers and I shall never forget their kind attentions to us during our imprisonment. I will take this opportunity of publishing their names: Lefebvre and Goudin, both of them old soldiers. I hope that Madame Thiers, to whom I subsequently had the honor of recommending them, will not have forgotten them. Old Lefebvre, as soon as he saw me, hastily asked, “They questioned you, did they? Will they set you free?”

“My good friend,” I answered, “I fear not; but I have made up my mind to it.”

On the 25th, between eight and nine o'clock in the morning, one of them mysteriously pushed back the wicket of my cell, and hurriedly whispered,

“Be ready, for the door may be opened at any minute; and once you are out, cut and run.”

I confess that, for the first time since my arrest, I felt an indefinable fear creep over me. I trembled and shivered and my heart beat thick and fast. I knew that our lives were in real

danger, and that our jailers were doing their best to save us. It was the tone rather than the words which conveyed this impression to my mind, but I found later that I had not been mistaken.

The Director Garreau, formerly a convict at Mazas, and consequently a right-hand man of the Commune, had proposed, on his own responsibility, to have us shot that morning, and then blow up the prison; but the chief employees had protested so vigorously that this double crime was not attempted. They asked this man, what had the prisoners done to deserve death? Then they argued that they themselves were the fathers of families, and were in no hurry to die. If he had taken the precaution to send his wife away several days ago, he should remember that their families were just as dear to them. Garreau, finding himself thus opposed by his subordinates, went out about eight o'clock, to procure new orders from the Commune. A few shells had fallen on the prison the night before, and the same noise had waked us up that morning. At nine o'clock, an awful explosion shook the building, which was singularly adapted to echo any sound of the kind, as it consisted of six immense wings radiating from a high rotunda. This shell, which was immense, caused the greatest consternation among the prisoners; many who dreaded such a death got quite delirious, and knocked frantically at the doors of their cells, crying to the keepers, "Open the cells! open quick." The latter were quite willing to do so, and we were soon in the courtyard. I noticed

that we were among the first, and it was an unspeakable delight to us to breathe the fresh air once more. It was only then that I learnt of the imprisonment of our young apprentices under the same roof as ourselves. They and the Brothers soon gathered around me, and also a Brother-Director from the Rue Oudinot. The prisoners numbered seven hundred and fifty. Among the rest was the venerable priest, Monsieur Crose, the chaplain of La Roquette prison, an old man so beloved by all the keepers that they had prevented him from being drafted off to Mazas the previous Monday, as were all the other priests. At La Roquette his life would have been in greater danger than here at Mazas.

The Brothers were about forty, all told. A few seminarists from St. Sulpice were there too. I was astonished to meet my old friend Monsieur Poitevin, an official of the Foreign Office, whose attenuated appearance shocked me greatly; he had evidently suffered much during his confinement. There were also deserters, thieves, etc., among the motley company, and even a few Communists; for although the saying goes that wolves respect each other, the Communists certainly sent their colleagues to prison whenever their own individual star happened to be in the ascendant. I suppose it was these men who raised the cry of "Long live the Commune!" the moment they regained their liberty. Still it was not to the Commune that they owed their freedom; for I afterward heard that when Citizen Garreau returned at eleven o'clock with two delegates, and found the birds flown, he got into a

most terrible passion. He stormed and stamped, and would fain have blown up the building; but the keepers had the pluck and presence of mind to resist his mad orders. They at last disarmed him and locked him up in a cell, whence he was taken the next day—Friday—by the Versailles troops, and shot in the courtyard of the prison.

Liberty, however, was a questionable boon just then; we jumped from the frying-pan into the fire as it were; for at the very gates of Mazas, we found the federals piling up barricades, and indiscriminately forcing every man to take part in their work—as useless as it was cruel—and even to don a uniform and take up a rifle. Few of us escaped this grisly masquerade; but thanks to my good legs, I and the Director of the Rue Oudinot managed to get away in safety.

After a mad run, which God alone guided to a safe end, we found ourselves gathered to the number of twelve persons on the Avenue of St. Mandé. A worthy man of the name of Mathier harbored us for thirty-one hours (in these emergencies one is apt to reckon by *hours*), and we can never be thankful enough for his well-timed hospitality. We and his own family were pretty well exposed to danger of some sort; for his house stood between two fires, the federals still occupying the barrier of the “Throne” whence their fire was incessant, and the Versailles troops gaining ground step by step on the opposite side. It was not until five o’clock in the evening that we could see, as well as hear, the regular troops. We feared that we should have to wait another twenty-four hours before we were in their hands;

but the barricade gave way at seven o'clock, and to our great delight, the bloody red flag was torn down and the tricolor planted in its stead.

Having caught the eye of an officer of the regulars, we asked him whether we could start in safety for our respective homes? We were anxious to allay the fears of our friends and well-wishers, the more so as the newspapers had that very day circulated a report that seventy Christian Brothers had been shot at Mazas. The officer told us we might go, and we were not slow in taking advantage of his permission. How glad we were to pass by our own army; the soldiers and officers knew us at once, though we were not in our habit, and asked us for news of the hostages, particularly His Grace the Archbishop. Our keepers had told us nearly the whole truth, and we had but sad news to give our friends of the army.

Twenty-five members of the Issy community were missing, and it was not till three or four days later that I had the consolation of knowing that God had providentially saved my whole flock. Our gratitude was naturally unbounded, the more so as our house remained standing, so that we were enabled to open our school at once. I trust that we shall diligently continue our efforts in favor of our dear young scholars, even should we have no better prospect for the future than an "ovation" of the kind which we received on the 8th of May, on our way from Montrouge to the Central Police-Court. We intend also to put up a statue in honor of St. Joseph, to whom we made several novenas during our captivity, and whose

powerful intercession we gladly acknowledge, for surely nothing less was required to save us and our house from the imminent dangers that surrounded them.

I remain, Monsieur, your humble servant in
Christ, BROTHER POTHUIS.

Issy, June 11, 1871

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.



I.

PROVIDENCE, for some inscrutable end, delivered over the capital of the old Christian kingdom of France to the irresponsible fury of that nameless power which ruthlessly makes experiments on the lives of nations, and seeks through the ruins of every social system some new form in which it may definitely embody itself. It covets no ideal dominion only, but a very material empire, and has given us lately many proofs of its rapacious nature ; we have felt its grasping hand and heard its frantic voice, and our eyes yet seem to gaze on the bloody sketch it has shown us of its intended dominion. In truth, we may say that we have had a foretaste of the rule of the Beast.

The peculiar watchword of this latest form of revolution—said Raoul Rigault to myself—will be, “ Death to religion, to ritual, to priests,” and he informed me further on, that, “ as long as one single man in the land dares pronounce the name of God, all our labor will have been in vain, and we shall not be able to lay the sword and rifle aside.”

I do not purpose to recount what every one

knows, nor even to tell all I know ; but the mist of forgetfulness is already thickening around us, and it is not well that such portentous details should be forgotten. Rigault's words struck me deeply. They have the very ring of realistic and positivist *dictums*. We have even seen them drawn to their legitimate conclusion. Rigault himself, carried away by a seething flood of conflicting opinion, did not forget his first principles. Witness the bloody walls of La Roquette.

The humblest and most popular representatives of Christianity were not exempt from this deadly hatred, and not even the Genevan Cross was able to shield from persecution the men who watched by the bedside of the wounded and the dying. The army and the whole country were witnesses of the charity of the Christian Brothers, those incomparable nurses and powerful assistants of the press ambulances.

The Commune, however, ferreted them out and arrested them on the very field where their useful charity was exercised. The savage cry was first, "Down with Black-gowns! let them hide their habit!" but it soon grew to this, "Nay, let them get out of this place, and go to join Darboy. Death to the Brothers!"

The ambulances had already been deprived of their principal organizer and secretary-general of the committee, Monsieur de la Grangerie, who had been imprisoned at La Roquette. Dr. Demarquay, now the chief and responsible representative of the work, accepted my offers of service. He took the medical department, while I attended to the outdoor work. He has said to me since

that it will always be one of the most honorable deeds of our lives, to have done what we could to protect the poor Brothers from the fury of the Commune.

How was this done? A short sketch of the facts relating to the presence of the Brothers in our midst, will explain matters. I must crave forgiveness beforehand for a certain coarse handling of some situations, as I wished to paint from nature, without gloss and without palliation.

While I was busy negotiating for the liberation of Monsieur de la Grangerie, Dr. Demarquay, according to our preconcerted plan, was trying to secure, through Dr. Claude, the official physician of the Commune, the immunity of the Brothers of the Longchamps ambulance from any immediate vexation. This was to be effected simply by a change of costume. The City Hall authorities had made no secret of the dislike of the Commune for all religious symbols, but until now the habit alone had been proscribed. The revolutionary fever, however, grew every moment so much hotter that new regulations and restrictions followed each other very quickly, a fact which was proved the next day after I had received the following letter from Dr. Claude:

"I send you an order for seventy uniforms of the National Guard; you can procure them at the military stores, and are requested to clothe the Brothers in them at once.

"CITY HALL, April 11, 1871."

On the 12th, I sent men to get this order executed, and gave them the letter and necessary papers. They were brutally received, and their

request denied. "The Commune was not going to serve out cloth for such a purpose, indeed! It was only for the patriots to use it. The Brothers might cut their own habits short or tuck them inside their trowsers," etc.

On the 16th, five days later, when I spoke to the two Mays, Elias and Gustavus, the Communist Comptrollers, the prejudice against the Brothers had risen to such a height that their very lives were no longer considered safe.

Meanwhile Monsieur de la Grangerie had been released from La Roquette. Citizen Raoul Rigault, whom I had importuned four times for the promise, at length gave it to me in the following refined language, "You are anxious about these brutes? Well, after all, it is nothing to me if the carrion rots at La Roquette or elsewhere. I will make you a present of it—no need to thank me—the dogs are not worth it! But you shall be answerable for them; and take good care that they do not interfere with us in any way; for I shall hold you responsible;" Raoul Rigault had taken back his pledged word, and we had nothing but chance to depend upon for safety.

Since that promise too, the vexations had grown more intolerable than ever. Not a day passed without some young doctor or apothecary of the press ambulances being arbitrarily arrested. They were insulted in the very discharge of their duties, and it was precisely one of these ever-recurring attacks that impelled me to go to the two Mays, to find out if I could what were Dictator Cluseret's dispositions toward our body.

Dr. Hargé, a Belgian physician of the Long-

champs ambulance, was with me. We were waiting our turn in a showy anteroom, when a young woman, dressed in a long purple satin train, swept by us and sat down to wait. We bowed as she drew near us, and in return, she settled herself boldly on a chair in front of us and began a most curious conversation. I was quite at my ease, for she evidently expected no courtesy from us. We knew at once that our interlocutrix was the "Citizeness" Eudes. We learnt from her lips the truth about our position.

She told us that it was settled that we should be suppressed, because our *agents* as well as the *agents* of the Versailles authorities were Christian Brothers. These devoted men were to be seized, incorporated in the National Guards, and sent to the most perilous advanced posts and trenches of the Commune. The employees of the press ambulances were to be distributed among the battalions where surgeons were scarce. As to our original organization, it might perhaps be allowed to stand, provided we would consent to receive as nurses women chosen by herself ("Citizeness" Eudes), and whom she was already gathering together. She placed herself at my disposition, added this woman, and would be happy to help us in our philanthropic and *humanitarian* task.

The "citizeness" evidently thought highly of the favor she so candidly offered us. We were to be the only ambulance of the great Commune; for her views were so liberal that she meant to swallow up every organization in one gigantic whole. As if to enhance the inestimable value of

her protection, she drew a feeling sketch of our present unfortunate condition, and sympathized with us for being the only ambulance still ruled by clericals, who, no doubt, imposed upon us at every turn. She feared we were blinded by their intrigues, and pitied us accordingly. She said, moreover, that it was conceivable that under such a *régime* as General Trochu's the cunning hypocrisy of a false patriotism should have deceived such intelligent and brave citizens as Ricord, Demarquay, and others ; but that it was marvelous that the Commune had failed to open their eyes to the danger they ran. For her part, she was fully convinced that the Brothers were blackguards. The most intelligent among them were spies in the monarchical interest ; the rest, whether nurses or litter-bearers, etc., were a flock of fanatical brutes who courted death through pure fanaticism, like stupid cattle (!!) They worry and torture the mind of the wounded and dying ; and she had good reasons for believing that they even poisoned, with infinite ingenuity, those *patriots* whose morals they had not been able to corrupt. It was the bounden duty of the Commune to break up this nest of disorder, whose chiefs deserved to have their heads cut off and carried in procession on the *tallest pikes* ; but since the citizens were averse to Quixotism, it would be sufficient to place these marplots in the van of the army and in the trenches, where they would at least be useful to shield the lives of the patriots.

This slight sketch (which is rather below than above the reality) will serve to show how far I

had drawn out the Citizeness Eudes, when she rose and offered me her hand (*horresco referens*!). She swore that she would use her influence to obtain the *simple expulsion* of the Brothers from the service of our ambulance, and that she would even beg for time to be granted them to disguise their *ignoble* persons and escape, though their appearance in disguise must doubtless be *more disgusting* than even their natural looks.

I was really alarmed at what I had heard from this woman, who at this moment happened to be all-powerful. Her behavior as a street-Clorinda* had completely fascinated the soldiers of the southern forts, where her husband was in command. She had herself loaded and fired the first gun that thundered from the fort of Issy, and often paraded before the troops with a rifle slung over her shoulder and a revolver in her hand. She told me herself that she had many a time put down her *barker* to pick up under fire the victims of the *revenge and fury of Versailles*. Her popularity obliged the War Delegate reluctantly to stand this virago's continual presence and frequent interference during his hours of business, and I knew that her intervention in the ambulance question was likely to be fatal to our hopes.

I was confirmed in my views on this matter by my subsequent interview with the Comptroller-General May. He did not know of my conversation with Citizeness Eudes, and repeated what I had already learnt; but his language at least was far more decent. He advised me to see the

* A warlike heroine of Tasso's poem, "The Deliverance of Jerusalem" (*Gierusalemme Liberata*).

War Delegate Cluseret, and to obtain, if possible, a definite answer, which would determine my own line of action, and he ended by promising me an interview with the great man as soon as possible. The next day, the 18th of April, I saw the Comptroller again, before presenting myself before Cluseret. Dr. Demarquay and Monsieur de la Grangerie were with me. May took me aside and told me that the latter's presence was unfortunate. "There are two apples of discord in your case," he said to me. "One is Monsieur de la Grangerie; the other, the Christian Brothers. I hope you may get clear off; at any rate, I will come with you, and stand between you and the delegate."

Cluseret was at dinner when we were ushered into his office. He came up to us with a napkin in his hand and a Tyrolese hat on his head.

"What do you want of me?" he asked.

The Comptroller gave our names and a sketch of our business. Monsieur de la Grangerie had just begun to speak, when Cluseret dryly interrupted him,

"So you are Monsieur de la Grangerie? You have been arrested? Rigault set you free again, you say?" Then turning to Dr. Demarquay and me, he continued, "The press ambulances are a hot-bed of reaction and a nest of spies. It is useless for you to protest. I have made up my mind about it. You are harboring just as many spies as you have Brothers in your employment. I have proofs of what I say. I shall come to a final decision to-day, and you will learn it through the columns of the *Official*."

"Very well," I answered; "but who is going to guarantee the personal freedom of my employees?"

"I have neither explanation nor guarantee to give you. Wait till the *Official* comes out."

"Very well, citizen delegate; in that case, the devoted men, whether Brothers or physicians, whom you leave thus exposed to an indefinite threat, will be justified in looking after their own safety. It would be too *ridiculous* if their charitable zeal should leave them open to personal danger. I therefore give you notice that you will have to provide *instantly* for six hundred wounded men whom we now deliver over to your care."

Cluseret was taken aback.

"Well," he said, "I give you twenty-four hours to provide for the safety of your staff and employees. Within that time the law will have decided."

"At any other time," I answered, "your word would have been enough for me; but, as it is, circumstances may at any moment render it null and void. I beg you will give me a written assurance which may serve to protect us against the vexations and counter-orders of the first citizen whose whim opposes your decree."

Citizen Cluseret turned on his heel; but changing his mind, sat down and scrawled a few lines, which he stamped with the mark of his private office. With an insolent, almost threatening nod, he took leave of us, and retreated to his dining-room. The paper bore these words:

"The press ambulance is temporarily allowed

to subsist, and is subject only to the orders of Dr. Courtillier, the head surgeon of the army.

“(Signed), G. CLUSERET,

“*War Delegate.*

“PARIS, April 18, 1871.”

The Comptroller beckoned me aside as we were going down the stairs.

“A word in season,” he whispered; “get rid of the Brothers in all haste, and let La Grangerie lie hidden out of sight. Do not hesitate, and do not trust the very ground you stand upon. Cluseret is furious. The Brothers will be arrested, and La Grangerie (who is in bad odor, though I don’t know why) will be shot. Throw every thing overboard, if you care to keep the ambulances. It might be safer to let the whole thing go, but it is useless trying to keep it as it is; you will lose all and endanger yourself.”

The situation was critical. Monsieur de la Grangerie declared that he had no intention of fighting these filibusters, and, having had enough of their sweet rule during his twelve days’ captivity, meant to put his person in safety at once. He bade us good luck, but left us with the advice that, under the circumstances, it was madness to persist in keeping the Brothers.

But the dismissal of the Brothers was not a feasible thing, unless we chose to risk the entire breaking up of our ambulance. Four hundred soldiers could not thus be left to shift for themselves, although some were well enough to take up their rifles in the same unworthy cause for which they had already suffered. On the other hand, I could not make up my mind to the intro-

duction of the civilian element, whether male or female, with which the Commune probably meant to saddle us. There was only one chance left, that of obtaining military nurses. I was aware that a certain number of soldiers belonging to the hospital service were imprisoned in the Military School. I went to the sub-overseer of hospitals, Démissols, and proposed my ultimatum, either to disband our corps on the spot, or to continue our services with the help of regular soldiers, which we had a right to demand, since our ambulances were under the control of the War Department. The plan was immediately communicated to the overseer, who seemed particularly pleased with it, and pledged himself to obtain Cluseret's consent. I wrote the following letter then and there :

“ TO THE CITIZEN DELEGATE, COMPTROLLER'S
DEPARTMENT :

CITIZEN : I beg to inform you that we have come to the conclusion to dispense with the male ecclesiastical nurses attached to our ambulance, circumstances being such as to deprive us of their experience and devotedness. You will be pleased to replace them by a sufficient number of military nurses, to be put at our disposal. Our medical staff will, under these conditions, continue to take care of the wounded.

“ N. COTTE,

“ Director of the Longchamps Ambulance.”

This done, I went to Brothers Calixtus and Bandime, Brother Philip's assistants, and told them that the state of things was such as to ne-

cessitate the dismissal and even dispersion of their body. The next morning, a commissariat officer arrived at Longchamps, at the head of a detachment of military nurses. He showed me a letter he had received from the sub-overseer of military hospitals. It ran thus:

PARIS, April 18, 1871.

" TO CITIZEN GAGEDOIS,

" Commanding the detachment of military nurses at the Military School :

" I am deputed to beg you to take the necessary steps for the transport of 105 military nurses, whom you will please take, at eight o'clock to-morrow morning, to the director of the press ambulances at Longchamp barracks. You are requested to place yourselves at the director's disposal. This corps of men is destined to take the place of the Christian Brothers, whom we have ordered to leave that post.

" Health and brotherhood.

" DEMISSOLS,

" Sub-overseer of Military Hospitals."

The Brothers' sudden departure, and the substitution of the military element, gave rise to a manifestation of public opinion that was not devoid of interest even to those well versed in the phenomena of popularity. The federal wounded were not the least affected among our men, nor the last to complain loudly of the bad treatment of men whose zeal and disinterested kindness they had quickly learned to reverence. The commandant of a Montmartre battalion swore that he would complain to the Commune, and that his men, when they should learn the facts of the case,

would bear him out in protesting against such a cowardly abuse of authority. Most of the federals, when first brought to the ambulance, had evinced a marked repugnance to, not to say a fierce hatred against, the Brothers. "What is the use," said they, "of getting our limbs broken for the sake of the red flag, if we are to fall into the hands of clericals for our pains?"

They spoke very differently now.

"Go and get killed, citizens, do!" they would say spitefully, "that the soldier rabble may get the upper hand after all."

These feelings continued, and the remembrance of the expelled Brothers kept up, by comparison, a kind of undercurrent of hostility against the military employees; I had reason, however, to congratulate myself on the summary course I had adopted.

II.

It was chiefly in their capacity as teachers of youth that the Christian Brothers were obnoxious to the Commune. The only ward where they were scarcely persecuted at all was the Sixteenth. The Communist delegate for this ward was Citizen Napias-Piquet, a friend and pupil of Prudhon, and formerly an attorney. He had been a convict for a few years, for what crime I do not know, and was one of those men whom I shall call utopian economists. He thought little of the young and inexperienced leaders of the Commune or the City Hall deliberations, which he would fain have seen directed toward the problems of social economy. Capital, property, and the organization of labor were his hobbies.

"But don't you see," I used to say to him, "that your friends don't care a straw about all that; that they settle all these questions summarily and uniformly, by seizing for the sake of destruction, and destroying for the sake of seizure; that they are busy with quite different questions; that they care no more for communal or local matters than they do for the Koran, and, finally, that what they want is chaos everywhere in order that they themselves may have the opportunity of climbing to the top of the tree?"

Napias allowed that most of these men were somewhat young, rather enthusiastic, and fond of destruction, but he swore that at bottom they were the best-hearted people possible. He was in hopes that the world would soon see that, once the ground was cleared, these chaotic intelligences would prove themselves to be endowed with considerable powers of organization. Napias was an enthusiast, not to say a monomaniac, on this subject.

The Citizen Napias-Piquet became a candidate for the Commune at the supplementary elections, and was beaten by Citizen Songuet, who polled 200 votes. Napias got 75, I believe. It was no doubt to console him for his defeat that he was allowed to retain his former post in the ward, with the title of Delegate Extraordinary of the Committee of Public Safety. He was particularly detailed to superintend confiscations, seizures of goods, expulsions, and other operations of this kind. Though he still looked upon me as a hopeless reactionist, I began to gain a hold on this mistaken but far from bad man, through my willingness to engage in discussions concerning the organization of labor. The questions of the day I wisely eschewed. I used my influence in every critical case that presented itself, and God knows they were neither few nor far between. I used it chiefly, perhaps, in favor of the Christian Brothers of this ward. Time after time, Citizen Napias showed me peremptory orders from the agents of the Commune, who thought him uncommonly slow in his operations against the Brothers' house at Passy. He so

skillfully let things lay, that the final catastrophe overtook him before he allowed any one to molest the Passy community. His personal feelings were opposed to the violence of his party. He had known Father Brumaud and the Trappists of Masagran in Algeria, and always spoke of them with respect and affection. He considered the persecutions of the Commune reprehensible to the last degree and worthy of the dark ages, and often affirmed that he preferred to undergo the worst punishments the Commune might have in store for him, rather than lend himself to its useless as well as wicked passions. He considered it his duty, on the contrary, as an honest man and a patriotic citizen, to do all in his power to counteract the frenzied enthusiasm which would lead astray the legitimate socialist movement of the 18th of March.

In return, I think it my duty to recall, in favor of this misguided man, every word or incident that may tend to allay, at least as far as he is concerned, the disgust excited by the memory of those who have served in the ranks of the Commune.

One day, Citizen Napias secretly accompanied me to the Brothers' house, Rue Oudinot. We spoke with Brothers Calixtus, Bandime, and Exupérien. As we left, Napias glanced back at the large building, and, seizing my arm, said, "Do you know what society ought to do? It ought to copy those men. That's the true Commune. Instead of persecuting them, we ought to study them; instead of evicting them, build on their plans; that's the Commune of the future! All

other questions are a pure loss of time, including the religious question, which is nothing more than a peculiar phase of the psychological evolution of the species."

I was dumbfounded, but more than ever convinced that the man had good in him despite his subversive theories.

The usual agents of the Commune were un- luckily not quite so well disposed, and the Brothers, except at Passy, were left no rest day or night. Witness the campaign of Citizen le Moussu against the Brothers of the Rue de Fleurus. On Sunday, the 7th of May, I received a visit from Brother Exupérien. He was in plain clothes, and sustained his part of an attorney to the very life. He told me that Le Moussu had seized the furniture of the Brothers' school, Rue de Fleurus, and, what was worse, had placed sentries to watch the Brothers whom he had found there in the discharge of their duties. He had vouchsafed no explanation, but the very facts of the case spoke for themselves. Either the number of the hostages was about to be increased, or the advance-guard of the army was to be replenished from the body of Christian Brothers. Brother Exupérien did me the honor to believe in my good faith, and had come to appeal to me for help.

It was a ticklish case, and the ground might give way beneath my feet at any moment, for I was in bad odor with the central authorities, to whom I was officiously denounced, lately, on some pretext or another. Besides this, the officials of the Sixth Ward, such as Urbain, Le Moussu, etc., were particularly tough customers to deal with.

Urged, however, by an irresistible desire to serve a cause so dear to my heart, I deliberated on the best means to reach my end and relieve the poor Brothers, and early the next morning, putting my trust in Providence, I invaded Le Moussu's *sanctum*, and abruptly asked to see the citizen on business. My manner, and still more my dress (conspicuously *official*), had the usual success, and I was ushered in without delay.

As I dared not compromise my only chance of success by a hasty plunge *in media res*, it will be understood that the conversation flagged now and then. The citizen's face was not reassuring. After a time, he asked me what I really wanted, for he was in a hurry and had an appointment.

"Well, citizen," I answered, "I shall be glad if the proposal I am about to make were submitted to the consideration of the Council."

"Well, what is it? We will see about it."

"If I have troubled you personally about it, it is only because it happens to be beyond the authority of Citizen Napias-Piquet, the Delegate of the Committee of Public Safety in the ward where I live. I believe your authority is as great as his?"

This question had the desired effect, and I was soon listening to a man who was fully alive to the importance of his protection, and who gladly paraded his omnipotence. It was easy enough now to make my proposal. I did it boldly, making believe to chime in with my friend's opinions. I spoke in warm terms of the terrible scenes of carnage on our ramparts, and complained bitterly of our insufficient staff of

employees, and, above all, of the cowardly reluctance of the citizens to devote themselves to the service of the ambulances. At last I hazarded my plan.

"The Brothers who helped us during the siege have been since incapacitated from hospital service. Other hard tasks, for which they are perfectly well fitted, have also been put beyond their reach. Of course it is most just that, under the present system, they should be forbidden to teach, but why, instead of keeping them idle or enrolling them in the National Guard, not compel them to take up once more, for the sake of our wounded, a task both hard and dangerous and disliked by the laity, who naturally prefer to die sword in hand? No matter if the Brothers shrink from this, let them be compelled to do so. It is useless to say that I know nothing of them *as* Brothers, but simply as citizens in soldier's dress. For my part, I claim them as litter-bearers whenever I can lay hands on them. The Passy men have mysteriously disappeared, but Citizen Napias, whose advice I asked, told me that you have a certain number of them at your disposal in the Rue de Fleurus, and in the name of our humanitarian service, I came to claim them."

Le Moussu looked embarrassed, and stammered,

"I could have done yesterday what is no longer in my power to-day. Those villains escaped last night. I hardly see how they managed it; they must have had determined accomplices somewhere. But your notion seems

a good, practical one, and I will do my best to further its execution. The strictest orders have been issued for their apprehension, and all or the greater number will no doubt be recaptured. I give you my word they shall be sent to you, on one condition only. They are to do really hard work, you understand? You shall have all those that fall into my hands."

I was going to leave, but Citizen le Moussu begged me to follow him to the Council-room. The event of last night, the flight of the Brothers, was being hotly discussed, and, through all the coarse jokes which it provoked, an undertone of impatient disappointment, which highly amused me, was very noticeable. Le Moussu renewed my proposal, which was generally approved. Only one dissentient voice was raised; it was that of Citizen Urbain, who sneered bitterly at Le Moussu's ready belief in the clericals' promptitude to devote themselves to the public good on the order of the State. This objection evidently told; it even staggered the confident Le Moussu. I hastened to remark that Citizen Urbain was quite right, but that I knew an infallible means of securing the Brothers' obedience.

"What is it?"

"The orders of their own superiors."

"Ah! indeed! you are joking! Where are you to find them; how are you to induce them to co-operate with you?"

"It may be difficult, but I can manage it."

"By chloroform?" laughed an army-surgeon.

"I think *ethereal* arguments will suffice, citizen doctor," I answered.

"Seriously," said another, "let us consider. Citizen le Moussu has not got to the end of his confiscation-list; the Brothers must have some movable or immovable property left somewhere in the city, and if so, it will sooner or later be known to him. A negotiation skillfully directed with a view to ulterior operations of this kind, will make the superiors cautious enough."

This possible combination of affairs seemed very laughable, and provoked much coarse merriment in the assembly. According to my invariable custom, when dealing with these citizens and their promises, I took care to note down in writing the concessions I had obtained. Meanwhile, Le Moussu had the following list drawn up for me.

"PARIS, May 8, 1871.

"List of Christian Brothers escaped from the Rue de Fleurus, and whom, wherever found, the Citizen Cotte (Director of the Press Ambulances) is authorized to claim for hospital service, and whom the municipality of the Sixth Ward is ordered to deliver over to said citizen, be the runaways arrested singly or all together.

"(Signed) CITIZEN LE MOUSSU.

"Sabatier, born October 10th, 1845.

"Williams (John), born December 15th, 1848.

"Bondarel (John Baptist), born March 25th, 1848.

"Torcheux (Joseph), born November 5th, 1845.

“ Bachelet (Aimé), born October 28th, 1831.

“ Chabrier (John), born April 25th, 1851.

“ Rouel (Michael), born July 17th, 1836.

“ Estival (Bernard), born June 20th, 1839.

“ Saby (Vitalis), born June 30th, 1841.

“ Thomas (John Peter), born November 16th,
1843.

“ Chaignet (John), born April 16th, 1825.

“ Bouthol (John Francis) born February 16th,
1834.

“ Thomas (John Peter), born April 16th, 1825.

“ Chol (John), born May 24th, 1851.

“ Foussat (Marianus), born July 30th, 1852.”

I took this list to our good Brother Bandime, and begged him to let me have every Brother he could spare me. I then communicated his answer to Citizen le Moussu, and thus satisfactorily provided a refuge open to the persecuted members of the Brotherhood, who would henceforth always find a home at the Longchamps Ambulance. It was a great boon to seven or eight of them, to my certain knowledge.

III.

THE Longchamps Ambulance quietly continued its work amid dangers and vexations of all kinds, and the medical staff waited patiently, in daily hopes of a speedy end to its labors. At first, the ridiculous was often mingled with the tragic, as each day and almost each hour caused some new and unexpected change of the basis of operations. Now Claude was uppermost with his centralizing policy, now Courtillier with his eternal subdivisions; in the twinkling of an eye, Roussel was before you, then a flank movement brought Rastoul upon you. But after a little while, things began to change; the day had gone by when sudden movements and forced marches were of any avail. The Versailles guns had spoken, and gloom and horror reigned everywhere. Corpses literally heaped the floor of our chapel, now transformed into a dead-house. The *Official* still stuck to its invariable bulletin, "Two dead and three wounded." One day, however, Ostyn, the editor, came in his red scarf to inspect our wards, and I incline to the belief that he did not know the extent of the untruths he spoke when he boasted before the wounded prisoners of the progress of the federal arms, the numberless victims on the Versailles side, and the comparative-

ly insignificant loss in the Communist ranks. The fearful noise of the guns and the rattling of the shot and shell were a pleasant comment on his encouraging words. Dr. Demarquay gave me a look; I caught his meaning, and took Ostyn to the dead-house, thus bringing him abruptly face to face with one hundred and seventeen corpses laid in two rows, their limbs shattered by the *mitraille*. At the other end of the ward, on the steps of the denuded altar, the coffins were being prepared.

"Here you have the 'two or three' victims of the *Official*," said Dr. Demarquay. "And from this sight," I added, "you may be able to imagine the impression made by such bulletins on those who come here daily to seek their friends."

The editor paled visibly, and left the hospital, his feet dragging in the blood that stained the floors. The next day, the *Official* forgot to mention the statistics of the fight.

The flagging energy of the defense, the desertion and insubordination of whole battalions, soon resulted in the triumph of the more violent party at the City Hall. "Refractories" were hunted down, and forced to fill up the ranks of the federals. The milder measures of Cluseret, Roussel, and other Communist theorists were superseded by the summary proceedings of the Central Committee, and of Citizen Delescluze. The change struck terror into all, and with terror came meanness. Secret denunciations daily increased the number of the victims, or at least the hostages. Even the citizens in high authority thought of nothing but of pointing the sword at

the heart of some colleague, that they might at least save their own skin.

Though I did my best to keep strictly within the limits of my own official position, I was not destined to escape this detestable plague of secret denunciations. Threatening notices rained on me day by day, and every hour brought with it some new danger to be guarded against, some intrigue to be unraveled; now and then my spirit flagged under this load of petty annoyances. Dr. Demarquay shared my troubles, and together we strove to cheer each other and bear our burden manfully. He, too, daily received warnings such as this: "You are no longer safe; the end is near and will be fatal; you will be arrested and shot."

For my part, I used to get letters like the following:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, May 14.

"CITIZEN DIRECTOR: How the deuce does it happen that I hear complaints made every day about the Christian Brothers, who are nursing the sick in your ambulance? The last complaint comes from the mayoralty of the Seventh Ward, and was addressed to the Inspector of the Central Committee. If you have any Brothers, pray get rid of them quietly, or else you may see them expelled under your nose by a squad of National Guards, armed with special orders from the Commune. This would be equally disagreeable for you and for myself.

"Health and brotherhood.

"(Signed) DR. SÉMERIE."

Citizen Sémerie was at that time Director-General of the hospital service. In private, he would speak confidently of the near downfall of the Commune, but in public, and when jealously watched by the Central Committee, he took most summary measures, and loudly threatened every one that approached him.

"In these times," he said to me, "one must howl with the wolves. There is no alternative save a ready shot, of which there are plenty to be had for the asking. Your life, and mine, and that of any one, is of no more value to these madmen than a penny pipe to be shot at for practice. You are evidently obnoxious to some one; and if it is still time, I advise you to 'cut your stick.'"

Such advice was certainly not calculated to cheer me, and besides I could not help thinking of the following saying, which I had heard not long ago:

"If I happened to be accused of having pocketed the towers of Notre Dame, I should take care to put a hundred miles between myself and my accusers."

I could not gainsay that, according to the gentlemen of the Commune, I was not irreproachable. The novitiate house of the Brothers in the Rue Oudinot had been turned into a hospital. A notice to that effect was posted up outside, and the flag of the Geneva Cross floated over the building. Those Brothers whom sickness or old age had prevented from making their escape had fled here for refuge, and in the mean while helped us to nurse the wounded. We had transferred a hundred of the latter from Longchamps, where

the shells constantly reached us, to this branch hospital; but although in secular costume, our helpers the Brothers had been recognized and denounced by former patients, so that, in view of my promise not to employ any more religious in our ambulance service, Dr. Demarquay and I were liable to serious accusation. It was held a crime deserving of capital punishment to have "treacherously given over the federal wounded into the hands of proscribed and disguised clericals." This was the basis of the accusations made against me at all times. Citizen Sémerie, who had only recently been promoted to a position of authority, was unaware of the existence of the branch hospital of the Rue Oudinot, and did not know what to make of these persistent denunciations, since I swore positively that we harbored no Brothers at Longchamps. My evasive answers were about to be unpleasantly sifted, and I was in a brown study about the best course to pursue, when I received the following letter:

"WAR DEPARTMENT, PARIS, May 19, 1871.

"CITIZEN DIRECTOR: If this is a joke, I must say it is a detestable one. At least every two days I hear complaints against the press ambulances, on account of the religious who are employed there, and who clash with the National Guards. These communications evince an annoying persistence. For God's sake, and especially for the safety of your ambulance, get rid of any religious you may have, under whatever disguise they may be! It is impossible, under existing circumstances, to keep and protect such people,

and I warn you again, that it will end by you all being either evicted or arrested by a battalion of National Guards. If there is any mistake, send a letter to the newspapers and justify yourself, for I assure you these complaints are incessant, and come from all quarters of the city.

“DR. SÉMERIE.”

“P. S. This is ‘private and confidential,’ but I shall nevertheless be obliged, for form’s sake, to send an inspector to investigate the case.”

The storm was about to break; there was not a moment to be lost. A quarter of an hour after I received his letter, I was closeted with Dr. Sémerie, and frankly explained the situation to him. No finessing was, in this case, so useful as a straightforward confession of facts, and indeed I had no wish but to get out of the difficulty. This explained the secret denunciations and also the interference of the Seventh Ward authorities. My sincerity was now proved.

“If the Brothers are surprised in their hiding-place,” said Sémerie, “they are doomed men. They are supposed to have fled. If they are caught, the brunt of the blow will fall on them; they will be taken as hostages.”

I represented to him that the few who were in the Rue Oudinot were either bedridden or occupied in nursing the bedridden.

“Yes,” he said, “their condition *ought* to appeal to the humanity of our rulers, but this is no time for theories. These *gentry* (the Communists) know and feel that their game is up. They have staked their lives, and will stop at nothing. Do

you suppose you can appeal to their compassion, when they would not even hesitate to destroy the whole city? Nothing and no one are safe. Believe me, and do not let us trifle with the situation. I am ready to help you, but I don't care about risking my life. What I *can* do, I will; especially by delaying the Inspector's visit. I will find some pretext for that, never fear. Let *all* the religious leave, even the bedridden. It is far better for their own people to take them away anywhere, than for the federals to carry them off to the "infirmary" of Mazas or La Roquette! If you care for them, be firm, and save them spite of themselves."

I knew the men who had now played their last stake too well not to agree with Dr. Sémerie. At first, I thought of sending the wounded of Rue Oudinot back to Longchamps, so that the Brothers might not have the additional sorrow of leaving their duties. But a little thought soon persuaded me that this would be an unwise proceeding, as the empty house would immediately be confiscated and remain at the mercy of the Commune. Then I decided, instead, to send part of our military nurses and medical staff from Longchamps to Rue Oudinot, for the Brothers being then gone, all ground for complaints would be taken away, and no investigation could harm us any longer. Dr. Sémerie approved of this plan, drew up a "claim" on the house abandoned by the Brothers, No. 27 Rue Oudinot, and promised to present it himself to the Central Committee. He then sent it on to me thus countersigned;

“Claim found valid and approved.

“(Signed) BERGERET.”

Armed with this warrant, I went to Rue Oudinot, and explained all to the Brothers. They saw the urgent necessity of a speedy removal, but it was indeed heart-rending to witness these venerable old men's grief at leaving home, and their hurried preparations. It was sad to think of the necessity that drove them forth in disguise, homeless and penniless, into an unsympathizing world. Brother Calixtus, whose great age made this trial peculiarly hard to him, touchingly deplored his fate and that of his infirm companions, but Brother Bandime, a younger and stronger man, and more of a Parisian, tried to hide his emotion, and to think seriously of the practical measures to be taken under the circumstances.

I could do nothing to soften the blow or make their exit less painful to them, but while reminding them of the probable shortness and sharpness of the coming decisive struggle, I promised faithfully to do my utmost to protect the house which we intended to occupy as a means of saving it.

It now remained for me to provide for the transfer of six hundred wounded and the rest of the hospital belongings. I went to the sub-overseer, Démissols, and told him of our exposed position at Longchamps, and the absolute necessity of removing our wounded to a place of greater safety.

“I understand your perplexity,” he answered, “and will manage to get you out of it. Delescluze shall sign this paper, giving you leave to

choose one of the several places herein mentioned, and to order as many carriages as may be necessary for the transfer of the hospital."

I showed him the paper signed by Bergeret, but he answered sharply,

"Come, citizen, I know all about it. The Executive Committee discussed the matter in my presence. You imposed upon Sémerie's credulity, and he imposed on Bergeret. Both were unaware of the house being the head-quarters of the Brothers. You are forbidden to occupy that building. The Central Committee has its own designs upon it, and, besides, it is going to be searched from cellar to garret."

Again were my plans defeated! I tried to insist, but Démissols got angry.

"Enough, citizen," said he, "we can not afford to joke any more. You have been too busy in favor of those Brothers; you have just committed a fresh indiscretion on their behalf, and I shall not abet you in it. Go where you like, to the Archbishop's house, to the northern, western, or Orleans terminus, but to Rue Oudinot you shall not go. Here is your permit, signed by Delescluze. Leave Longchamps and keep quiet. Some people are watching you with the eyes of a cat; I only hope they may not claw you like the same amiable animal. For my part," added Démissols in a whisper, "I begin to feel hot here, and shall make myself scarce. It is high time. They are going to set fire to the city, which is a game I do not relish. You hold my last official autograph in your hand."

I told all my experiences of this day to Dr.

Demarquay, who agreed with me that our departure from Longchamps must be speedily arranged. The plateau was no longer safe, being constantly under fire. Two men had been wounded lately in the tents, and fragments of shell dropped through the torn roofs and fell between the patients' beds. A partial and leisurely transfer was no longer possible ; it must be hurried and immediate, and not a soul must be left behind. Our arrangements were all made the same night. The next day, the 20th of May, at eight o'clock in the morning, a hundred carriages filled the neighboring streets, trying in vain to reach the hospital, with which during the night all communication had been cut off. Citizens Gaillard and Dereure were superintending the barricades to be erected to check the inevitable oncoming of the regular troops. These patriots, with their characteristic contempt for all human life not their own, had not chosen that the Longchamps hospital, already riddled with shot, should prove the slightest obstacle to their proceedings. I was furious, but after three hours spent in vain endeavors, I at length procured, through Citizens Napias and Songuet, an order authorizing us to demolish one barricade. We were thus enabled to leave Longchamps. Dr. Demarquay and I had agreed to ignore the prohibitions of the Committee, and to go straight to our chosen destination, Rue Oudinot. We accordingly took possession of the house.

Our first precaution was to take the best measures we could to prevent any damage being done to the establishment. This was not easy

with such a mixed crew as ours. We had to check the rapacity of 120 military nurses and 200 convalescent federals, who seemed to consider the house their legitimate booty. Dr. Demarquay took possession of the community-room, while the Brothers' cells were assigned to the medical staff and non-commissioned officers. A few rooms mentioned to me by Brother Bandime were locked up altogether. The library was secured from harm by being given up to those who had the charge of the hospital clothing. The administrative officers established themselves in the ground-floor rooms, while I chose for myself the drawing-school, which was full of small things of some value. A few thefts there certainly were, but nothing very costly was stolen, and two severe punishments, with a threat of a more summary nature still, were enough to hold our people in check.

A vague rumor reached us on Sunday, the 21st, that the army was not far off now. We were all together in the dining-room. The meals were here, as at Longchamps, the only breathing-time of the medical staff, whose devotion to their duties was incessant. The whole day was one long strain on the nerve and the moral endurance of our physicians and surgeons; we spent all our time in bringing in the wounded from under the very muzzles of the guns, or in performing operations, which became at last so numerous that our head men never got a moment's rest from morning till night. Now, however, we began to see some chance of release, and our conversation grew more animated than

before. We had just sat down to table, when a group of scared faces appeared at the door.

"The house is surrounded!" cried a sergeant. "They are outside, and crying out for the Director."

"Who?"

"The federals."

And indeed there was part of a battalion, the One Hundred and Twenty-second, filling the yard. Amid general consternation, we rose quickly, and I went toward the yard, from which a long passage separated us.

"We are in for it this time!" whispered one of the administrative officers, who had gathered a few of our men together. The confusion and noise in the main yard were indescribable. Rifles were stacked in shining array by the great door. My appearance was greeted by a dead silence; our freedom, and most likely our lives, hung by a thread.

"I wish to see the officer in command," I said to the foremost men, in a loud, firm voice.

"The commandant!" cried several.

There was a stir among the men, and an officer stepped forward.

"Citizen," he asked, "are you the Director?"

"Allow me," I interrupted. "Before you examine me, let me know who you are yourself? who sent you? what do you want here?"

"I am the commandant of this detachment, and have been sent here to garrison the house. I care for nothing but my orders. If you are the Citizen Director, you will have to cry quarter."

"Have you any written order? Show it to me."

The officer drew out his pocketbook, and unfolded a large sheet stamped with the official stamp of the Central Committee. The order was evidently genuine.

"The Central Committee!" I cried, as I fell back a step or two. "This is none of their business; you may go back and tell them that I snap my fingers in their faces."

Blank astonishment. Silence. I must support the advantage my boldness has given me, so I take a dive into the newspaper *lingo*, and go ahead.

"Ha! so you think you are going to get the upper hand so easily, do you? You think that we have been working hard and risking our lives every day for two months only to dance to the tune of people who lord it at the *Government Tavern*! and that, too, while you are being cut down by thousands and we have not men enough to go and pick you up! See here, that is Dr. Demarquay, an eminent surgeon, and thirty or forty other physicians and surgeons, the best in Paris, getting no rest night or day, nursing the wounded citizens! They have six hundred men to look after; what does the Central Committee care for that? Six hundred cripples, eh? what does it matter; let the dogs live or die; they are useless anyhow! And then they tell you, who come so readily to take their places, 'See, there is a house that will suit you; go and take it, make a barrack of it.' And I say to you, by all that is sacred, you shall *not*! It is the refuge of your

wounded comrades, the home of the friendless, and you may come to it yourselves for aught you know, and *then* you shall be taken care of like the rest. You understand? Then leave this place at once. I swear to you I will not give in, and the first who comes a step nearer is a dead man!"

A murmur of acquiescence ran through the troops.

"The citizen has the gift of the gab—he isn't wrong either. What are we doing here, after all, and what business is it of ours? This is a hospital, not a barrack."

The officer spoke for all; and addressing me, "Citizen," he said, "don't get angry over it. I have executed my orders. You don't want us here. Very well, we are quite content to go; that's about as much as we care about it all! If they are anxious to turn you out, they can send more men. Now then, friends, right about face!"

The retreat was delayed by the free distribution of a few gallons of wine among the patriots. We improved the opportunity by dropping a careless hint, here and there, of the vicinity of the regular troops, who had already seized on the *Trocadéro*. This information frightened even the thirstiest of our guests, and they made haste to rejoin the bulk of their comrades posted outside, to whom they communicated a regular panic. The large battalion that had approached us in such fine order retreated in scattered knots, each man looking cautiously over his shoulder, and skirting the wall with great pertinacity.

When the warriors had left us, and we were

carefully closing the doors, we came upon sundry rifles and sabres, dropped in the hurry of the flight. A tin box containing the stamp of the One Hundred and Twenty-second Battalion was also picked up; this I subsequently gave to Brother Philip, who put it among the records of the house, where it is kept as a souvenir of the dangers that once threatened the devoted building.

The struggle within the city lasted for a whole week. The shells flew in all directions over our heads, and, what was worse, the insurgents stationed in the attics of neighboring houses often made a mark of us. A shell once burst on our roof, and one evening a rattling fire of smaller projectiles, from the direction of the belfry of the Sacred Heart Church, smashed all the windows of the hall where we sat at supper. This was nothing to what we had to undergo in the moral order.

The neighborhood was averse to us, and if we showed ourselves outside the doors, we were saluted with sour looks and biting jests. "Brutes! they have turned the poor Brothers out, and sacked their house. They'll have a day of reckoning yet!"

This antagonism grew worse and worse, when the troops at last gained the mastery and garrisoned the neighborhood, and it ended in our being denounced to the military authorities as inveterate Communists! Dr. Demarquay especially was pointed out as a dangerous man, and it was believed at one time that his arrest had been decided upon. Thus, after having steered our bark through manifold dangers, it was decreed

that we should gather a meed of personal mistrust and misapprehension, and be coldly looked upon by every party.

Our character was a little redeemed when the Brothers came back, and we gladly gave up the house to its legitimate owners. But I believe that even then the people secretly taxed the good religious with a too merciful behavior toward us, so deep was the popular resentment against the stupid instigators of bootless persecutions, and so true their dormant love for these "best friends of the poor," whose enemies we had, for a time, been obliged to appear.

N. COTTE,

*Late Director of the Press Ambulances
of Longchamps.*

THE GERMAN CHURCH OF ST. JOSEPH.



I.

PARIS, according to its wonted characteristic vitality, was already shaking off the evil effects of a foreign war ; bidding adieu to its enforced seven months' holiday, and putting on the garb of cheerful every-day labor ; sending its children to school, and making them forget, in the renewed ardor of study, the unhealthy excitement of military life, when all of a sudden the unchecked passions of a few desperate men shattered this budding prosperity even as the whirlwind suddenly drives a host of lowering clouds across a bright summer sky.

The heroic city whose dogged resistance to the invader had drawn upon it the attention and admiration of all Europe, now became the helpless prey of every horror and disaster engendered by an insurrection the like of which history had never yet witnessed.

This parricidal war, breaking out as it did at the very moment when the vital forces of the nation and of every individual should have been

steadily directed toward the healing of the wounds made by the siege in the body politic, was, for this very reason, more reprehensible and despicable in its nature than it would have been at any other time. Miracles of patriotism and of self-devotion were needed to blot out the sad remembrance of the greatest reverse ever experienced in the glorious annals of France, but it was far otherwise, and a yet worse disgrace was at hand. The war began under the windows of the German Church of St. Joseph.

The school was at first rendered inaccessible by two barricades, which completely inclosed it. It was necessarily shut for a few days, but the children of the neighborhood soon grew familiar with the forbidding aspect of the federals, ventured to climb the barricades, and at last knocked somewhat hesitatingly at our door. They seemed scared at first, and looked about them as if they dreaded to see some fell apparition in the very school-room ; but gradually they were emboldened, and even greeted us with a knowing air, which would have been amusing had we not feared the effects and dangerous example of that passionate, misdirected enthusiasm, or rather excitement, which was daily gaining ground in the minds of the people, and even drew into its vortex persons hitherto justly considered models of respectable and peaceful citizens.

The school was reopened, spite of some irritable drawbacks, such as the absence of a few scholars, the departure of others, and a general restlessness among those who remained. Our fears had been but too true : the children, excited by

the feverish moral atmosphere around them, grew violent, unruly, and utterly forgetful of those principles of veneration upon which alone a solid education can be built.

The future seemed darker every day, and a new press now appeared, as if to add to the general confusion by its foul language and unheard-of license. The worst passions of the people were sedulously aroused and inflamed; no principle was safe from scurrilous attack, no person from arbitrary arrest and a lodging in Mazas prison. It was high time for Christian men and women to practice the gospel teaching to the letter, to live as if each day were to be their last, and be ready at any moment to leave all things, even liberty and life itself.

Every outward excess that could characterize the most blasphemous revolutionary outbreak had been perpetrated; generals had been shot like dogs; the twelve bishops and hundreds of priests imprisoned and threatened with death; the churches sacked and defiled; monks and nuns turned out and declared unfit to teach youth, and still the Brothers of St. Joseph's Church, though living in one of the turbulent quarters of the city, had not yet been molested. Except the anxieties and vexation inseparable from the situation itself, nothing prevented them from continuing their works of mercy. The first trouble which they experienced at the hands of the government was the following.

The commissariat department which had been established during the siege in the school-yard, had been reorganized for the benefit of the fede-

als, and the municipality now proposed to install a certain number of young "citizenesses" as cooks and barmaids. One might guess that the women chosen by the Commune would scarcely be the *crème de la crème* of the neighborhood; it was far more likely that they would be recruited from the ranks of the convicts *in esse* or *in posse* of the St. Lazarus Prison.

No matter who they might be, the Brothers' rule peremptorily forbade the presence of women within their establishments. The Brother-Director represented to the delegates of the Committee that the house belonged neither to the State nor to the city corporation, but was the private property of a few rich families of Alsace and Lorraine, who had appropriated it to the service of their poor countrymen, of whom a large number lived in this quarter of Paris. He himself, as the Director of the house and the representative of the owners, was alone responsible for the use to which the premises were put, adding, however, that the house and grounds having been devoted, during the siege, to a legitimate and humanitarian purpose, he had no objection to extend the permission and allow such a purpose to be still fulfilled—on this condition, however, that *men* only should be employed in the cooking and distributing departments. It was not seemly, he continued, that the centre of benevolence, charity, and Christian teaching should be turned into a den of prostitution.

The delegate stared, and left the house somewhat disconcerted at this bold and honest declaration.

"I will report your objection and proposal to the competent authorities," said he.

He did not return, and the Brother gained his point; the "citizenesses" were expelled, and a non-commissioned officer of the National Guard detailed to the superintendence of the government stores in our yard.

Things, however, grew worse; the Jesuit Fathers of the German mission were the first to be turned out, then the Sisters in charge of the girls' schools, and at last the Brothers, who could stand their ground no longer, were forcibly expelled. It was on the 20th of April that, having procured foreign passports, and safely hidden away their costly sacred possessions, the Brothers, still wearing their habit, dispersed, with the hope that God would protect their house in the city, and bring them back to it in safety when the storm should have at last spent its fury.

II.

OUR heart fails us as we look back on the scenes of disgusting profanity which followed the Brothers' departure.

The officer in charge of the commissariat at once gave the order to break in pieces, and throw into the gutter, the beautiful statue that adorned the cloister-yard. Luckily enough, he was prevented from personally superintending the execution of his orders by a more serious call on his time and attention—namely, the wish to make acquaintance with the contents of the altar. The men, meanwhile, were loth to proceed to such lengths, and remembering the unvarying kindness of the poor Brothers, hid the statue, and told their superior officer that they had destroyed it.

There was no one, however, to prevent the second act of sacrilegious folly which the intoxicated man now committed. He and a worthy friend, of the same stamp as himself, dressed themselves in the cassocks, cloaks, and hats left behind them by the Brothers, and, thus accoutred, took a prayer-book under each arm, and paraded the streets, crying, "Long live the Commune!" and carefully making prolonged halts at every tavern which they passed.

The inhabitants, thinking that the Brothers had come back, rushed to their doors and win-

dows to behold the singular sight of religious cheering the Commune and the enemies of God and all religion, but soon discovering their mistake, they drew in their heads, and kept their comments to themselves. Even if they did not dare openly to cry "Shame!" on the profane *travestie*, they had at least enough decency left not to countenance it by their presence.

The Central Committee had not yet abandoned its original idea of lodging at St. Joseph's some of the future heroines known as *petroleuses*, and whose fanatical zeal had already become so conspicuous as to call for some outward reward. The neighborhood, however, was not quite ripe for this innovation, and there was some reason to believe that not only the inhabitants of the ward, but even the soldiers at the commissariat depot, would be unwilling to receive the *ladies* graciously.

The doughty warrior above mentioned undertook to *protect* them. Armed to the teeth, he welcomed and established them in their new quarters; but the last vestige of respectability fled at their approach, and no man who valued his good name would have any thing more to do with the house.

Then began the era of disgusting bacchanalian orgies, and the yards and buildings that had formerly echoed the hymns and psalms of Christian singers, now rang with the howls of maniacs whose filthy songs might well have driven away all holy guardian angels, and called up in their stead the legions of hell.

The inhabitants of the neighborhood will never

forget the prolonged nightmare which these disgusting scenes kept up for weeks in their midst. At last came the day of reckoning, when the Commune urgently needed all its supporters, whom, doubtless in view of this emergency, it had skillfully posted in places whence they might be ready to answer to its call. The dregs of society were upheaved, and these wretched satellites of the Commune came forth from every hole and corner to do their shameful work. Spell-bound Paris saw them pass from the drunkenness of beasts to that of demons, from the intoxication of wine to that of blood. The distance from a drunken threat to a bloody or fiery execution was not great, and it is this that makes us shudder so at the details of those ill-fated days.

III

AFTER an enforced absence of six weeks, and many wanderings through the provinces, the Brothers of St. Joseph's Mission were enabled to return and reopen their schools. Their home-coming was a triumphal "progress:" children and parents vied with each other in welcoming them back. But if this reception was festive, the aspect of the poor house was pitiable enough; the "abomination of desolation" had had free sway there; every trace of shameful excesses was there in its naked hideousness; an intolerable stench, in which the fumes of wine, brandy, blood, and powder were horribly mingled, filled the rooms; the walls were scrawled over with obscene, blasphemous, or threatening sentences, and broken forms, rickety desks, torn pictures, and heaps of broken glasses and bottles strewn the class-rooms and yards of the house.

"And yet," says one of the Brothers, "we hardly knew whether to mourn what we had lost, or rejoice over what we had been permitted to keep! It might have been so infinitely worse!" In truth, the material damage to the building was slight: in one or two places a shell had burst through the roof, and a few windows had been broken by discharges of musketry; that

was all. We have already described the awful state in which the last tenants had left the classrooms and many others; but on the other hand, the chapel, the library, the community-room, etc., were in perfect preservation. It seems that this part of the house had been purposely closed, and reserved for the last day of the intended sack and burning of all religious houses over the city. The rapid advance of our troops alone prevented the consummation of this last enormity.

The moral losses undergone by the Brothers were less easy to make up for than the material ruin of their buildings. Few houses in Paris were so crippled by the war as the German Church of St. Joseph. The foreign war and the German exodus from the capital were heavy blows in themselves; the patrons of the church were gone, and two hundred children had left the schools; out of six classes, two had been necessarily suppressed. Even the full complement of these remaining classes was seldom present at one and the same time. Many children were kept at home to help in the daily earnings or household labors that had become of such paramount importance to many families formerly well off, and the privations of their home-life communicated to those children who *did* attend school a certain mental sluggishness very difficult to overcome. This moral drawback is disappearing by degrees, but the school has deteriorated in point of numbers. Those one hundred and eighty children whom circumstances drove to other neighborhoods—where are they? what has become of them? how many may have died or become vagrants? The

revolution chooses its victims, as well as its agents, among all classes of society, indiscriminately, whether on the threshold of life or on the brink of the grave, among honest wives and mothers or among the daughters of shame. How true a word was that which a writer of our day has uttered, saying that this upheaval was a delirium, a fierce madness! Indeed, it was a madness, portentous and hellish, a blast from the mouth of the abyss itself.

St. Joseph's Mission-School now only reckons two hundred and forty out of its former five hundred scholars, and even this reduced number bears the indelible stamp of the trials that have gone over their heads. Their poor little famished faces show the ravages of hunger and cold and nakedness, and, what is worse, their young hearts bear bitter witness to the harm done by undue popular excitement.

We must not omit to say that the zeal, charity, and devotedness of the Brothers have fully risen to the level of their new and more arduous task, that they do not shrink from their hard duties, and know that the road before them is not strewn with roses; but they have a firm belief in the help of God, and, strong with a divine strength, they will overcome all obstacles, and prove once more to the world that a Christian education is the first and most sacred right of the family and the nation.



LA VILLETTE.

As in all other distant quarters of the capital, the Brothers, notwithstanding the many services they had rendered the people, could not depend on the friendly offices of the inhabitants of La Villette. The respectable part of the population was entirely cowed by the federals, who had made these distant quarters their peculiar stronghold. The citizens no longer dared to raise their voices in favor of any cause which they had at heart, not even that of their own liberty of thought and speech. This terrorism was the mainspring of the revolution, which, by this means, was enabled to defy our army for two long weary months, during which it held Paris literally choked in its iron hand.

By the middle of April, the Brothers found the place too hot to hold them ; serious danger was to be apprehended, while, on the other hand, there was no work of mercy left within their power. To remain at their post in useless inactivity was irksome to them, as well as imprudent ; still they hesitated ; but, on the 18th of April, they were warned that if they did not soon decamp, the federals would not be slow to take

them into custody. They left the house that evening, and the porter, with a few brave well-wishers, remained to effect a safe transfer of the most precious possessions of the community. This was done the same night, without mishap of any kind.

The next day, all was quiet, and the porter, thinking it had only been a false alarm, already regretted the Brothers' hasty departure, when, on the next day but one, a delegate of the Commune and several subordinates made their appearance. He was very angry to find the "birds flown," but as yet no disorder took place in the house, and after a search, resulting in the capture of a few habits and other articles, which were piled on a cab and carried away, the delegate took himself off, and ingloriously brought away the poor porter as a trophy of his raid. The latter was accused of being an "unpatriotic citizen" for having allowed the *clericals* to escape. According to the Communist code of morals, it is a meritorious act to denounce or spy upon the man whose bread you eat.

The municipal authorities did not think fit, however, to punish the porter for this crime, and released him with a reprimand, whereupon the faithful fellow returned to his post, as he had promised the Brothers to do, and remained there watching over his masters' interests until they came back. It was through him and some of the children that we learned that the delegate had touched nothing in the house, and that the subsequent havoc was the work of the freethinkers

installed there by the Commune as teachers of youth.

Among other things, a large statue of the Blessed Virgin excited the greatest fury. The image of the Divine Infant was first torn from his Mother's arms; then the head was chopped off, then the body of the statue cut in pieces, and the whole made into a bonfire. The altar in the chapel was broken in pieces; every religious symbol shared the same fate, and the tabernacle in particular provoked the most ingenious demonstrations of hatred. Every thing in the shape of pictures, statues, books of devotion, belonging to the school-room, was first broken, torn, or trampled, and finally destroyed by fire.

These things were all done before the children and with their help, but the greater part of these boys were far from approving in their hearts what their hands were forced to do. Many openly expressed their indignation and refused their help. One of them, a boy of thirteen, had the courage to say to the head-master,

"Take care; it is God whom you are insulting, and he will punish you."

The child spoke true: the unhappy man was shot, only a few yards from the school-walls, the day the troops entered the city.

As for the Brothers, their return was hailed as a special providence, and I doubt if those who were loudest in denouncing them before the 10th of March, 1871, would care to turn them out again, since they have had such an excellent opportunity of comparing them with the Communist teachers of youth!

THE COMMUNITY

OF THE

BROTHERS OF BERCY.

I.

THE Brothers' house in the Twelfth Ward was broken into by the Communists on the 19th of March, 1871, and knowing themselves to be especially open to the attacks of the federals in this district—one far from the centre of Paris—the good religious determined to use the greatest circumspection in their dealings with the Administrative Committee.

It was not long before the decree was promulgated which substituted the blood-red flag for the tricolor; the Brother-Director was summoned to give in his adhesion, and as he did not seem eager to do so, a delegate and a commissary, both wearing the red scarf of office and armed with murderous revolvers, presented themselves at the house, and saw the flag hoisted in their presence.

Then came the general election all over Paris for candidates to the Commune. A delegate of the Central Committee, escorted by a commis-

sary and four ruffianly-looking men, brought an order to the Brothers requesting them to leave the doors of the house open till midnight. No objection was made to the arbitrary command, though it was perfectly superfluous, as hitherto the voters had always gone to the polling-booths through the Rue Nicolai. As it happened, no one but the delegate and his suite passed through the open gates of the yard that day.

A few days later, the Brother-Director was obliged to consent to the installment of a registry-office for volunteers in one of the lower rooms of the house, which office might just as well have been put anywhere else. The delegate presiding at this operation was a demagogue of the first water, and gladly gave the poor Brothers a sketch of the proposed Communist policy toward their order. The Brother-Director having hazarded some observation not relished by the man with the red scarf, the latter half drew his sword and thundered out,

“Don’t you know, fool, that this house and all its contents are ours, and that I can turn you all out if you make the shadow of a difficulty?”

These vexations had hitherto not interfered with the works of the Brothers in their capacity of teachers, a position still tacitly recognized as theirs only. The school was better attended than ever, for parents were too anxious to prevent their children from mingling with the crowds in the streets not to be particular about sending them to school. One day, a federal came to demand admittance for his son, and the Brother-Director told him as

considerately as he could that, the number of scholars being complete, he could only write down his boy's name for the first vacancy that should occur. (The ward authorities fix the number to be received in these schools.) The man was astonished that his uniform should not have been able to command more attention, and even create a place for his son, and left the house in high dudgeon. The very same day, Citizen Philip, to whom the federal complained, issued an order to the effect that any child brought by a National Guard should be admitted at once and without examination.

This was the first attack on the liberty of the school, but it was to be feared that public attention having once been drawn to it, it would not escape further measures of as arbitrary a nature.

The registry-office had meanwhile become the regular meeting-room of the municipality, who constantly held special sessions there, so that the poor Brothers were often obliged to sit up half the night waiting for the breaking up of the endless meetings of a committee self-constituted a "court-martial." The Brothers were thus half dead with fatigue, and could not even watch through the night without dreading some ever-possible new contingency. Indeed, what violent measures might not those men be capable of, after a long discussion ending in a drinking-bout, and when they had worked themselves up to believe that the safety of society and the regeneration of the world lay in their hands?

Beyond the local circle of La Villette, things were growing desperate, and it was not difficult

to foresee that a day would soon come when the habit of a religious would become an offensive object in the sight of all officials. We had a proof of this in a few days. If it was accidental, it was likewise significant.

On the 17th of April, as the Brother-Director was crossing the Rue Charenton, he was stopped by one of those wretched men with demon's faces whom one never sees save in times of social revolution, who, with uplifted fist, exclaimed, as he spat in the Brother's face,

"You carrion! your time is short! I will have your life before long!"

The street was crowded, and if no one cheered this wretch nor followed his example, neither did any one bravely come forward and cry "Shame!" upon such an outrage. The Brother went his way as meekly as our Divine Master has enjoined us all to do under similar circumstances, but his soul was sad within him. His tears, driven back by an indomitable will, fell like bitter, scorching drops on his soul. If the tree is known by its fruits, what could he think of the maddened populace who can stand by and see God's messengers insulted, even if it does not join in the insult?

A prudent and reliable friend to whom he related this incident gave him this advice:

"Brother, this is a sign of the times—a straw that shows which way the wind blows. Great events are at hand; you will need all your courage and fortitude, and perhaps sooner than you imagine."

On the morrow, the 18th of April, late in the evening, a friend of the house came hurriedly with

the news that it had been decided to arrest the whole community the following morning, at six o'clock. This contingency having been foreseen, every thing had long been in readiness, and the superiors had given the necessary orders beforehand. There was no delay, and the Brothers were gone before dawn.

The delegates came at six o'clock, and found the house empty. The boys arrived an hour or two later, and learned from the disappointed federals that the "birds had flown." (Their language, however, was somewhat more forcible, but we do not feel inclined to reproduce it.) The children were bolder than the grown men, who dared not lift up their voices in favor of the best friends of the poor. They, on the contrary, were lavish of tears and regrets for themselves, sympathy for their persecuted teachers, and, above all, bitter invectives against the persecutors. It was a regular insurrection, which each child did his best to foster, on his return home, in the bosom of his family.

What had become of the Brothers? They had communicated with a friend, Monsieur Bourgeois, who had hired a few carriages, with which he met them in Reuilly Square, so that, on leaving their house, they left Paris for good. A few did not leave the city till evening, and the Brother-Director, like a gallant captain who is the last to leave the sinking ship, remained till all had got safely away. The federal who was so anxious to capture the Brothers might look elsewhere for new laurels, for God and Monsieur Bourgeois had swiftly put the community far beyond their reach.

A few days previous to their departure, the Brothers had stored their furniture, etc., in a safe place, under the care of a few respectable neighbors, who, with praiseworthy zeal, looked after it as if it had been their own. All would have gone well, had not a woman who had discovered the hiding-place sold her knowledge to the Commune, whether through greed or spite none can tell. The delegates were delighted to be able to lay hands on the *property*, since the *owners* had outwitted them. They sent to the place pointed out to them, confiscated whatever suited them best, and drew up an official inventory of the rest. They were disappointed to find neither wine nor church-plate, and proceeded in consequence back to the house, where they must surely find—so they argued—some secret store of valuables. They turned every thing inside out, broke open locked doors, smashed the paneling and the walls, tore down the partitions, and even searched the well. They could not understand how any body of men could be able to live without brandy, and only buy sufficient wine for every day's consumption, and therefore concluded that the hiding-place must be deeper or further yet. In hopes of finding it, they next proceeded to tear up the boarding of the ground-floor rooms.

The porter's wife had been dragged along with them in this search, and seriously threatened unless she would disclose what she truly said would be difficult to confess, since there was nothing hidden anywhere in the house. They took her away and imprisoned her for twenty-four

hours, using every conceivable means to make her betray the hiding-place of the Brother-Director, *the villain, the blackguard*, who, when removing his things, had not had the grace to buy wine for his successors, but who, thank goodness, could not be far, since the strictest orders had been given for his apprehension if he attempted to pass the gates.

II.

The Communist delegates made a great show of the ceremony of installation of the Brothers' successor. The same scenes were renewed as elsewhere: crucifixes, statues, and pictures disappeared under the hammer and the axe; the *Marseillaise* was frantically intoned. The delegates and their friends, it is true, had to play the part of audience as well as of actors, for only a few children answered the summons of the municipal authorities. The benches which under the Brothers' management were so densely filled that there was not a vacant seat to be had, remained pretty well empty as long as the Christian teachers were absent.

What more emphatic mark of approval could the ecclesiastical system of education crave? The satellites of the revolution cover it with the mud of sarcasm and libel; the federals sack and profane its temples; but, individually and as fathers of families, one and all bow to it as the only true system, and will intrust their children to none but the Brothers. The real popular opinion, the household opinion of each father, has never been more clearly proved.

We will draw a veil over the horrors of the last week of the insurrection at Bercy. Such

sketches are stale now, and we leave the rest to our readers' imaginations. Instead of that, we will pass to the 2d of June, the day on which the Brothers took possession of their house and school, and where the warmest and most respectful sympathy was, here as elsewhere, showered on them.

The sight of the religious habit amid these streets yet strewn with blood and ashes, is hailed as a sign of returning prosperity, an earnest of future peace. The people themselves wonder at the sudden respect for these men, a respect they so little dreamed of possessing when they formerly eyed them with suspicion or indifference. What is it that has kindled this unwonted feeling? The moral greatness of the Brothers has only been revealed to the ordinary citizen by the sight of men who have proved themselves stronger than fate and more powerful than persecution. The parents' esteem is only outdone by the children's love for these same Christian teachers.

But a greater honor yet has been paid them, and has proved to the world how far the terrible risks which the Brothers have undergone have served to put in bold relief their unspeakable fortitude and latent worth. This is the warm welcome extended to them by the former ward authorities, who were already established in their old functions.

"These gentlemen," writes the Brother-Director, "received me with a flattering and unusual cordiality. Their welcome surprised me the more because I was used to very different manners in the old times of their administration.

The mayor was especially solicitous concerning the vexations he feared we had suffered during his enforced absence from office ; in a word, the local authorities simply overwhelm us with considerate attentions."

How true it is that God causes "all things to work together for good," and that from the direst evils he knows how to bring comfort and joy to those who, bowing to the storm, have taken trials at his hands as if they were the choicest gifts of his love !

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